

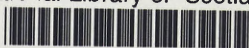
A SOUGH O' WAR

BY

CHARLES MURRAY



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A SOUGH O' WAR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HAMEWITH. 5s. net.
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CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

A SOUGH O' WAR

BY CHARLES MURRAY

AUTHOR OF 'HAMEWITH'



LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

First published 1957

Printed in Great Britain

TO A YOUNG SAPPER
SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE
AND TO ALL IN WHAT-
EVER AIRT UPHOLDING
THE FAIR NAME AND
HONOUR OF SCOTLAND

Some of these verses have already appeared in *The Times*, *Aberdeen University Review*, *Dunedin Magazine*, *Chambers's Journal*, and elsewhere.

*YE'RE better men, ye're baulder men,
Ye're younger men forby,
Mair fit we ken than aulder men
To answer Scotland's cry.
Yet mony a chiel that's beld an' grey,
An' trauchlin' at the ploo,
Would fain fling up his tack the day
To face the frem't wi' you.
Gey short o' breath, but keen an' teuch,
It's but his birn o' days
That hauds him here by closs an' cleuch,
Lythe haughs an' heathery braes.*

*Wi' apron neuks the lasses dicht
Their weary grutten een,
An' waukin' mithers lie at nicht
Thinkin' o' them 'at's gane;
They're sad an' silent at their meat,
Saft-fittit but an' ben,
But they can thole, for they can greet,—
It's steekit teeth for men.
An' yet they're liftit up an' prood,
They've reason for their pride,
Kennin' the onsets ye've withstood,
The dirdin's ye've defied.*

*Tak' then for kain these strouds o' rhymes
Fae yont the shoudin' sea,
To mind ye o' the Land at times
That, thanks to you, is free.
Or, neth a lift onkent an' dour,
Whaur new starns rise an' set,
They may come in some antrin' oor,
To help ye to forget.
An' in the tongue we never tine,
In words as bairns we spak',
Here's Scotland's biddin' in a line,
' Hing in an' haiste-ye back.'*

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A SOUGH O' WAR

THE corn was turnin', hairst was near,
But lang afore the scythes could start
A sough o' war gaed through the land
An' stirred it to its benmost heart.
Nae ours the blame, but when it came
We couldna pass the challenge by,
For credit o' our honest name
There could be but the ae reply.
An' buirdly men, fae strath an' glen,
An' shepherds fae the bucht an' hill,
Will show them a', whate'er befa',
Auld Scotland counts for something still

Half-mast the castle banner droops,
The Laird's lament was played yestreen,
An' mony a widowed cottar wife
Is greetin' at her shank aleen.
In Freedom's cause, for ane that fa's,
We 'll glean the glens an' send them three
To clip the reivin' eagle's claws,
An' drook his feathers i' the sea.

A SOUGH O' WAR

For gallant loons, in brochs an' toons,
Are leavin' shop an' yard an' mill,
A' keen to show baith friend an' foe,
Auld Scotland counts for something still.

The grim, grey fathers, bent wi' years,
Come stridin' through the muirland mist,
Wi' beardless lads scarce by wi' school
But eager as the lave to list.
We 've fleshed o' yore the braid claymore
On mony a bloody field afar,
But ne'er did skirlin' pipes afore
Cry on sae urgently to war.
Gin danger 's there, we 'll thole our share,
Gie 's but the weapons, we 've the will,
Ayont the main, to prove again
Auld Scotland counts for something still.

WHA BARES A BLADE FOR SCOTLAND?

WHA bares a blade for Scotland ? she 's needin'
ye sairly noo,

What will ye dae for Scotland for a' she has
dane for you ?

Think o' the auld-time slogans, the thread
runnin' throu' your plaid,

The cairns o' the Covenanters whaur the
martyrs' banes are laid ;

Ay, the faith o' your godly fathers, is it naething
to you the day ?

Wha bares a blade for Scotland ? noo is the
time to say.

Whaur are the bairns she sheltered, the sons
she was laith to lose ?

When they wandered awa' on the ootwith roads,
whaurever their fancy chose ;

Are ye crowdin' the tramps an' troopers, beatin'
hame wi' your hearts a-throb ?

Or speakin' as big as ever,—but nae throwin'
up your job ?

Ye stand to the toast 'Wha's like us?' an'
shout as ye answer 'Nane,'
Weel, noo is the time to prove it, i' the teeth o'
the warl' again.

O ay, ye said ye were sorry when a chiel that
ye kent was killed,
But did that gar ye miss your mornin', or speir
gin his place was filled?
Ye've read aboot Bruce an' Wallace, an' the
fechts that they focht langsyne,
An' mony a tale an' ballad hauds your forbears'
deeds in min';
O, they were the lads for Scotland, they stood
for her staunch an' true,
But what o' the bairns that's comin', will they
say the same o' you?

Ye ken o' your country's story, is this then to
end it a'?
Ye are heirs o' her auncient glory, can ye see sic
a fate befa'?
Can ye look on her purple heather, her hills an'
her howes o' fame,
An' find but a shamefu' tether that keeps ye
content at hame?

FOR SCOTLAND?

17

Gin Death be the price o' Freedom, Death 's
little eneuch to pay ;
Wha bares a blade for Scotland ? her back 's
at the wa' the day.

1915.

TO THE HIN'MOST MAN

THE mist creeps up roun' the hillside sheilins,
The snaw lies deep on the distant Bens,
November skies in the wintry Hielans
Hang dull an' grey owre the lanely glens.
But still I trow fae the clachans yonder
The peat reek curls to the lift the same ;
An' far an' wide tho' our footsteps wander,
Our hearts still turn to the auld Scots Hame.
North or South as our Fate may find us,
East or Wast as our Luck may lan',
Send but the cry, an' abreist ye bind us—
Scotland yet !—to the hin'most man.

THE THRAWS O' FATE

HAD I been born in auchty instead o' saxty-three,

Ye wouldna fin' me pu'in' neeps at hame
But plashin' throu' the boggy haughs in Flanders
owre the sea,

Whaur cairn an' cross still tell oor forebears'
fame,

An' layin' on wi' dunt for daud until the foemen
flee,

Had I been born in auchty an' nae in saxty-three.

Had Jean ta'en me in ninety instead o' ninety-nine,

Oor loon would noo be auld eneuch to list,
Gin he was yonner yarkin' on hale-heartit for
the Rhine

I wouldna aye be thinkin' I was miss't.

An' prood an' anxious we would be wi' Donal
in the line,

Had I got Jean in ninety instead o' ninety-nine.

Had I been born in saev'nty an' wed in ninety-
twa,

The loon an' me had sodgered wi' the rest,
To houk oor trench an' haud it there the mauger
o' them a',

An' mairch an' chairge as bauldly as the best,
An' Jean would dicht a dowie e'e wi' baith her
men awa',

Had I been born in saev'nty an' wed in ninety-
twa.

But I was born owre early an' Donal far owre
late,

Sae we maun soss awa' amo' the kye ;
I gang nae mair to markets, o' kirk I've tint
the gait,

At smiddy an' at mill I hear the cry
For men, an' here I hing my heid an' ban
the thraws o' fate,

That I was born sae early an' Donal cam' sae
late.

THE WIFE ON THE WAR

THE wifie was thrang wi' the coggin' o' caur,
 An' makin' new cheese an' the yirnin' o't,
 But when the guidman loot a wird aboot war
 She fairly got on to the girnin' o't.
 'Deil birst them,' quo' she, 'I would pit them
 in jyle

Oonless they gie owre wi' the killin' o't,
 We've wantit bear-meal for oor bannocks this
 fyle,

There's nane left to leuk to the millin' o't.
 An' bide ye, ye'll see, gin this fechtin' hauds on
 The hale quintr side will be ruein' o't,
 There's nae teucher ley than oor ain on the
 Don

An' fa's gyaun to tackle the ploo'in' o't?
 They chairge noo for preens, an' the merchants
 mainteen

That naething but war is the rizen o't,
 Dyod! the nation that winna lat ithers aleen
 Deserves a lang knife in the wizzen o't.

22 THE WIFE ON THE WAR

But it blecks me to see fat it maitters to hiz
Gin Kaiser or Tsar hae the wytin' o't,
Gin the tane taks a tit at the tither chiel's
niz

Need we hae a han' at the snytin' o't?
Syne see the fite siller on papers ye spen',
The time that ye connach at readin' o't,
Wi' specs on, ye hunker for 'oors upon en',
The wark 's left to me an' the speedin' o't.'
The aul' man is kittle, he raise on the runt—
' Ye jaud, wi' your tongue an' the clackin'
o't,

Were ye whaur I wish—in a trench at the
front—

Nae German would stomach the takin' o't.
I tell ye, ye beesom, oonless 'at oor loons
Oot yonner can gie them a lickin' o't,
They 'll lan' i' their thoosans an' blaw doon oor
toons,

An' start to the stealin' an' stickin' o't.
Syne, Lord! I can see ye, gyaun doon the neep
dreels,

Wi' barely a steek for the happin' o't,
An' a lang soople sodger that 's hard at your
heels

Wi' a dirk i' your ribs for the stappin' o't.

THE WIFE ON THE WAR 23

They 'll nail your twa lugs to the muckle mill
door,

Like a futtrat that 's come to the skinnin'
o't,

An' thraw your deucks' necks an' mak' broth o'
your caur—

Pit that on your reel for the spinnin' o't.'
' Haud, haud,' quo' the wifie, 'ye 're fleggin'
us a',

Come haiste ye, gin that be the meanin' o't,
Rax doon the aul' gun fae the crap o' the wa',

It 's time ye set on to the cleanin' o't—
Ye aye were richt deidly at doos an' at craws,
An' skeely at Yeel at the sheetin' o't—

Gie me syne the chapper, we 'll fell them in raws,
An' leave them sma' brag o' the meetin' o't.

Gin mornin' was come, seen as ever it 's licht,
Sen' Rob to the sergeant for dreelin' o't,
An' the deemie will start wyvin' mittens the
nicht,—

I 've a stockin' mysel' at the heelin' o't.
An' noo jist to cantle oor courage a bit,
An' haud the hairt stoot in the bodie o't,
Fesh oot the black pig, there 's a drap in her yet,
An' I 'll get the teels to mak' toddy o't.'

FAE FRANCE

DEAR JOCK—Like some aul' cairter's mear I 'm
 foonert i' the feet,
 An' oxter-staffs are feckless things fan a' the
 furth 's sae weet,
 Sae, till the wee reid-heidit nurse comes roon to
 sort my bed,
 I 'll leave my readin' for a fyle, an' vreet to you
 instead.

Ye hard the claik hoo Germany gied France
 the coordy lick,
 An' Scotlan' preen't her wincey up an' intill't
 geyan quick—
 But fouk wi' better thooms than me can redd
 the raivell't snorl,
 An' tell ye fa begood the ploy that sae upset
 the worl'.
 I ken that I cam' here awa' some aucht days
 aifter Yeel,

An' never toon nor fee afore has shootit me sae
weel ;

They gie me maet, an' beets an' claes, wi' fyles
an antrin dram—

Come term-time lat them flit 'at likes, *I'm*
bidin' faur I am.

Tho' noo an' than, wi' dreepin' sark, we've
biggit dykes an' dell't—

That's orra wark ; oor daily darg is fechtin'
fan we're tell't.

I full my pipe wi' bogie-rowe, an' birze the
dottle doon,

Syne snicher, as I crack the spunk, to think
hoo things come roon ;

There's me, fan but a bairn in cotts, nae big
aneuch to herd,

Would seener steek my nieves an' fecht, than
dook or ca' my gird,

An' mony a yark an' ruggit lug I got to gar me
gree,

But here, oonless I'm layin' on, I'm seldom
latten be.

As I grew up an' filled my breeks, fyow market
days we saw

But me an' some stoot halflin chiel would swap
a skelp or twa ;
It's three year by come Can'lemas, as I've
gweed cause to min',
That Mains's man an' me fell oot, an' focht
about a queyn.
We left the inn an' cuist oor quytes ahin' the
village crafts,
An' tho' I barely fell't him twice wi' wallops
roon the chafts,
I had to face the Shirra for 't. 'Twas byous
hard on me,
For fat wi' lawyers, drinks, an' fine, it took
a sax months' fee.
I would a had to sell't my verge, or smoke a
raith on tick,
But for the fleein' merchant's cairt, my ferrets
an' the bick.
Ay, sang ! the Shirra had the gift, an' tongued
me up an' doon ;
But he's a dummy till his sin, fan han'lin' oor
platoon ;
Gin's fader saw his birkie noo, an' hard the
we he bans,
He michtna be sae sair on some that fyles
comes throu' his han's.

Ae mochie nicht he creepit ben the trench—
it 's jist a drain—

An' kickit me aneth the quyte an' cursed me
braw an' plain—

' Ye eesless, idle, poachin' hurb, ye 're lyin'
snorin' there,

An' Germans cryin' to be killed, but deil a hair
ye care.

Fatever comes ye 're for the lythe, to scrat, an'
gant an' drink,

An' dream aboot the raffy days fan ye was i'
the clink ;

Ye 're dubbit to the een, ye slype, ye hinna
focht the day,

Come on wi' me an' see for eence gin ye are
worth yer pay.'

Man, fan he spak' sae kindly like, fat was there
left for me

But jist to answer back, as frank, as furth-the-
gait an' free—

' Lead on, my Shirra's offisher, gin summons
ye 've to ser'

Upon thae billies owre the loan, I 'll beet ye
I 'll be there ' !

Syne laden wi' a birn o' bombs we slippit throu'
the dark,

An' left upo' the barbit weer gey taits o' breek
an' sark ;

They bummed an' droned some unco tune as
we crap up ; it raise

Like fae the laft I've hard the quire lift up
some paraphrase.

Ae creeshy gurk that led the lave was bessin'
lood an' strang,

Fan something hat him i' the kyte that fairly
changed his sang ;

We henced an' flang, an' killed a curn, an'
soosh't them front an' flank,

Like loons that's trued the squeel to stane
young puddocks i' the stank.

The rippit spread, the rockets raise ; 'twas time
for hiz to skice,

An' tho' we joukit as we ran, an' flappit eence
or twice,

Owre aft oor pig gaed to the wall, for noo we
strack the day—

Oor brow Lieutenant onywye—fan a' in lames
it lay ;

A bullet bored him throu' the hochs, it took
him like a stane,

An' heelster-gowdie doon he cam' an' brak his
shackle-bane :

To hyste him up an' on my back nott a' my
pith an' skeel,

For aye he bad' me lat him lie, an' cursed me
for a feel.

'Ging on an' leave me here, ye gype, an' mak'
yer feet yer freen'.'

'Na, na,' says I ; 'ye brocht me here, I'm
nae gyaun hame my leen.'

He's little boukit, ay an' licht, an' I'm baith
stoot an' swak,

Yet I was pechin' sair aneuch afore I got him
back.

They thocht him fairly throu' at first, an'
threepit he was deid,

But it was naething but a dwaam, brocht on
by loss o' bleed.

'Twas months afore he cower'd fae that, an' he
was missed a lot,

For fan ye meet a hearty breet ye're sorry gin
he's shot.

His mither sent a letter till's, a great lang
blottit screed,

It wasna easy makin't oot, her vreetin's coorse
to read ;

She speir't could she dae ocht for me, sae I
sent back a line—

' Jist bid yer man, fan neist I 'm up, ca' canny
wi' the fine.'

But noo to tell hoo I wan aff fae dreelin', dubs,
an' din,

An' landit here wi' nocht to dae but fite the
idle pin.

Ae foraneen my neiper chap cried—' Loshtie-
goshtie guide's !

The founmarts maun be caul the day, they 've
startit burnin' wydes.'

The reek at first was like ye 've seen, fan at the
fairmer's biddin',

Some frosty mornin' wi' the graip, the baillie
turns the midden.

But it grew thick, an' doon the win' straucht
for oor lines it bore,

Till shortly we were pyoch'rin' sair an' fleyed
that we would smore ;

An' as ye never ken wi' cyaurds faur ye 'll be
herried neist,

We fixed oor baignets, speel't the trench, and
chairged them in a breist.

'Twas than I got the skirp o' shell that nail't
me i' the queets,
An' here I 'm hirplin' roon the doors, an' canna
thole my beets.

Some nichts fan I've been sleepin' ill, an'
stouns gyaun doon my taes,
Aul' times come reamin' throu' my heid, I 'm
back amo' the braes ;
Wi' wirms an' wan' I 'm throu' the breem, an'
castin' up the burn,
Land aye the tither yallow troot, fae ilka rush
an' turn :
I hash the neeps an' full the skull, an' bin' the
lowin' nowt,
Lythe in the barn lat oot for rapes, or track a
fashious cowl ;
I watch the leavers o' the mull swing roon for
'oors an' 'oors,
An' see the paps o' Bennachie stan' up atween
the shooers ;
Lead fae a roup a reistin' stirk, that 's like to
brak the branks,
Or hearken to the cottar wives lyaug-lyaugin'
owre their shanks ;

I join the dancers on the buird schottischin' at
the games,
An' scutter in the lang forenichts wi' britchin,
bit, an' haims ;
Or maybe, cockit on the shaft, fan cairtin' corn
or bear,
Cry ' Hie ' an' ' Wo ' an' ' Weesh ' again to
guide the steppin' mear.
An' in the daylight tee, at times, fan lyin' here
sae saft,
I've dream't, gin eence the war was by, o'
takin' on a craft.
Fan a'thing's sattled for the nicht in stable
an' in byre,
It's fine to hae yer ain bow-cheer drawn up
anent the fire,
An' hear a roch reid-heidit bairn, wi' ferny-
tickled nose,
Tired oot an' hungry fae the closs, come yaum-
merin' for his brose ;
An' syne a wife—but, weesht ! for here's my
nurse, the couthy ted,
Come cryin' I maun dicht my pen, an' hirsle
to my bed.
Gweed nicht !—but bide, or I forget ; there's
jist ae little thing—

Man, could ye sen' me oot a trumpe? I'm
weariet for a spring.

For, Jock, ye winna grudge the stamp to cheer
a dweeble frien',

An' dinna back it 'Sandy' noo, but 'Sergeant'
Aberdein.

1916.

BUNDLE AN' GO

It's 'Bundle an' go,' an' goodbye to the harrow,
 Fareweel to the reaper, the rake an' the ploo,
 I 'm throu' wi' the spaad, an' the graip an' the
 barrow,

An' naething will ser' me but sodgerin' noo.

Sodgerin' noo.

The grieve canna haud me fae sodgerin' noo.

I 'm tired o' the stable, its brushin' an' bleckin',
 O' feein' an' flittin', an' cairtin' my kist,
 I 'm weariet o' sawin', an' sievin' an' seckin',
 I 've seen my last lowsins, I 'm leavin' to list.

Leavin' to list.

As soon as I 'm suppered I 'm leavin' to list.

The snaw's lyin' deep by the dyke faur it
 driftit,

The Spring fan it comes will be cankert an'
 weet,

The yokin' half throu' aye afore the mist's liftit,

There may be a sun but it 's seldom we see 't.

Seldom we see 't.

We hear o' the sun but it 's seldom we see 't.

The lass I was coortin' has mairriet the miller,

A dusty dour deevil, as bide ye she 'll see,

But noo she 's awa' it 's a savin' o' siller,

Nae mair she 'll get fine readin' sweeties fae
me.

Sweeties fae me.

The times she got quarters o' sweeties fae me !

I 've focht wi' the weather, the wark an' the
weemen,

Till faith I 'm in fettle for facin' the foe,

An' waukin' or dreamin' I hear the pipes
screamin'

' Hie, Jock, are ye ready to bundle an' go ? '

Bundle an' go.

Wha bides fan the pipes bid him ' Bundle an'
go ' ?

WHEN WILL THE WAR BE BY?

' THIS year, neist year, sometime, never,'
 A lanely lass, bringing hame the kye,
 Pu's at a floo'er wi' a weary sigh,
 An' laich, laich, she is coontin' ever
 ' This year, neist year, sometime, never,
 When will the war be by ? '

' Weel, wounded, missin', deid,'
 Is there nae news o' oor lads ava ?
 Are they hale an' fere that are hine awa' ?
 A lass raxed oot for the list, to read—
 ' Weel, wounded, missin', *deid* ' ;
 An' the war was by for twa.

DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS

(Exemption Tribunal)

NAE sign o' thow yet. Ay, that 's me, John
Watt o' Dockenhill :

We 've had the war throu' han' afore, at
markets owre a gill.

O ay, I 'll sit, birze ben a bit. Hae, Briggie, pass
the snuff ;

Ye winna hinner lang wi' me, an' speer a lot o'
buff,

For I 've to see the saiddler yet, an' Watchie,
honest stock,

To gar him sen' his prentice up to sort the
muckle knock,

Syne cry upo' the banker's wife an' leave some
settin' eggs,

An' tell the ferrier o' the quake that 's vrang
about the legs.

It 's yafa wedder, Mains, for Mairch, wi' snaw
an' frost an' win',

The ploos are roustin' i' the fur, an' a' the
wark 's ahin'.

38 DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS

Ye 've grun yersels an' ken the tyauve it is to
wirk a ferm,
An' a' the fash we 've had wi' fouk gyaun aff
afore the term ;
We 've nane to spare for sojerin', that 's nae
oor wark ava,
We 've rents to pey, an' beasts to feed, an' corn
to sell an' saw ;
Oonless we get the seed in seen, faur will we be
for meal ?
An' faur will London get the beef they leuk for
aye at Yeel ?
There 's men aneuch in sooters' shops, an' chiels
in masons' yards,
An' coonter-loupers, sklaters, vrichts, an' quarry-
men, an' cyaurds,
To fill a reg'ment in a week, withoot gyaun
vera far,
Jist shove them in ahin' the pipes, an' tell them
that it 's ' War ' ;
For gin aul' Scotland 's at the bit, there 's nae-
thing for 't but list.
Some mayna like it vera sair, but never heed,
insist.
Bit, feich, I 'm haverin' on like this, an' a'
I need 's a line

DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS 39

To say there 's men that maun be left, an' ye 've
exemptit mine.

Fat said ye? Fatna fouk hae I enoo' at
Dockenhill?

It 's just a wastrie o' your time, to rin them
throu', but still—

First there 's the wife—' Pass her,' ye say.

Saul! had she been a lass

Ye hadna rappit oot sae quick, young laird, to
lat her pass,

That may be hoo ye spak' the streen, fan ye was
playin' cairds,

But seein' tenants tak' at times their menners
fae their lairds,

I 'll tell ye this, for sense an' thrift, for skeel wi'
hens an' caur,

Gin ye 'd her marrow for a wife, ye woudna be
the waur.

Oor maiden 's neist, ye 've heard o' her, new
hame fae buirdin' squeel,

Faur she saw mair o' beuks than broth, an'
noo she 's never weel,

But fan she 's playin' ben the hoose, there 's
little wurd o' dwaams,

For she 's the rin o' a' the tunes, strathspeys,
an' sangs, an' psalms ;

40 DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS

O' 'Evan' an' 'Neander' baith, ye seen can
hae aneuch,
But 'Hobble Jennie' gars me loup, an' crack
my thooms, an' hooch.
Weel, syne we hae the kitchie deem, that milks
an' mak's the maet,
She disna aft haud doon the deese, she's at it
ear' an' late,
She cairries seed, an' braks the muck, an' gies
a han' to hyow,
An' churns, an' bakes, an' syes the so'ens, an'
fyles there's peats to rowe.
An' fan the maiden's friens cry in, she'll mask
a cup o' tay,
An' butter scones, an' dicht her face, an' cairry
ben the tray.
She's big an' brosy, reid and roch, an' swippert
as she's stoot,
Gie her a kilt instead o' cotts, an' thon's the
gran' recruit.
There's Francie syne, oor auldest loon, we pat
him on for grieve,
An', fegs, we would be in a soss, gin he should
up an' leave ;
He's eident, an' has lots o' can, an' cheery wi'
the men,

DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS 41

An' I'm sae muckle oot about wi' markets till
atten'.

We've twa chaps syne to wirk the horse, as
sweir as sweir can be,

They fussle better than they ploo, they're aul'
an' mairret tee,

An' baith hae hooses on the ferm, an' Francie
never kens

Foo muckle corn gyangs hame at nicht, to
fatten up their hens.

The baillie syne, a peer-hoose geet, nae better
than a feel,

He slivvers, an' has sic a mant, an' ae clog-fit
as weel ;

He's barely sense to muck the byre, an' cairry
in the scull,

An' park the kye, an' cogue the caur, an'
scutter wi' the bull.

Weel, that's them a'—I didna hear—the laadie
i' the gig ?

That's Johnnie, he's a littlan jist, for a' he
leuks sae big.

Fy na, he isna twenty yet—ay, weel, he's
maybe near't ;

Owre young to lippen wi' a gun, the crater
would be fear't.

42 DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS

He 's hardly throu' his squeelin' yet, an' noo we
hae a plan

To lat him simmer i' the toon, an' learn to
mizzer lan'.

Fat? Gar him list! Oor laadie list? 'Twould
kill his mither, that,

To think o' Johnnie in a trench awa' in fat-
ye-ca't;

We would hae sic a miss at hame, gin he was
hine awa',

We'd raither lat ye clean the toon o' ony ither
twa;

Ay, tak the wife, the dother, deem, the baillie
wi' the mant,

Tak' Francie, an' the mairret men, but John
we canna want.

Fat does he dee? Ye micht as weel speir fat I
dee mysel',

The things he hasna time to dee is easier to
tell;

He dells the yard, an' wi' the scythe cuts tansies
on the brae,

An' fan a ruck gyangs throu' the mull, he's
thrang at wispin' strae,

He sits aside me at the mart, an' fan a feeder's
sell't

DOCKENS AFORE HIS PEERS 43

Taks doon the wecht, an' leuks the beuk for fat
it 's worth fan fell't ;

He helps me to redd up the dask, he taks a han'
at loo,

An' sorts the shalt, an' yokes the gig, an' drives
me fan I 'm fou.

Hoot, Mains, hae mind, I 'm doon for you some
sma' thing wi' the bank ;

Aul' Larickleys, I saw you throu', an' this is
a' my thank ;

An' Gutteryloan, that time ye broke, to Docken-
hill ye cam'—

' Total Exemption.' Thank ye, sirs. Fat say
ye till a dram ?

March 1916.

AT THE LOANIN' MOU'

THE tears were drappin' fae baith her een,
When I was sayin' 'Goodbye' the streen,
An' we baith were wae as we weel micht be,
The wife at the mou' o' the loan an' me.

Yet what could I do at a time like this
But lift her chin for a pairtin' kiss,
An' leave her to look to the bairns an' kye,
An' warsle her lane till the war was by?

Wi' the country cryin' for mair to come,
What man could bide at the lug o' the lum,
Or sleep upon feathers or caff for shame
To think he was lyin' sae saft at hame?

What scaith may come man canna foresee,
But naething waur can a mortal dree
Than leavin' a wife at a time like noo,
Greetin' her lane at the loanin' mou'.

LAT'S HEAR THE PIPES

LAT's hear the pipes. When Daavit soothed
the king

An' thoomed the harp, an' flang aside the sling,
Baith Saul an' Psalmist had come better
speed

Wi' some brisk port upo' the chanter reed,—
The lad's brogue beatin' to the dirlin' spring.

A mither's diddlin', till her bairn can bring
The sleep that flees fae fussle, trumpe or string,
But gin ye 'd heeze the hert, an' stir the bleed,
Lat's hear the pipes.

Nae liltin' lasses gar the gloamin's ring,
Auld men an' frail maun face the furth's on-
ding

At scythe an' plow, for mony a lad lies deid
Whaur nae Scots divot kindly haps his heid.
In dowie days, when few hae hert to sing,
Lat's hear the pipes.

HAIRY HEARS FAE HAME

*The aul' man starts, gey grumlie as ye see,
 Syne the gweed-wife taks haud an' cairries on,
 Mary, the neiper lass pits something tee,
 An' last comes Sandy—he's a nickum thon.*

The Aul' Man.

There's naething new, excep' that ye're awa' ;
 Fae year to year it's aye the same aul' thing,
 Up to the gartens twa-three months in snaw,
 Syne rivin' win's that tirr the byres in Spring ;
 A caul' coorse Simmer, only gweed for girse,
 An' Hairst is on ye or ye hardly ken ;
 Rent day an' reekin' rucks set up your birss,
 An' there ye are amo' the snaw again.

Roon rowes the sizzens, Life rowes roon the
 same ;

A bairn is born, is spean't an' into breeks,
 Wydes throu' the carritches, an' leavin' hame
 Fees, an' afore his feerin's straucht, he seeks

A cottar hoose to haud as daft a queyn ;
 He dargs an' stairves ; a hoast brings on the
 en',
 An' comin' fae the fun'ral' some day syne,
 Ye hear the howdie's on the go again.

The Gweed-wife.

Ye ken your father, never heed him, Hairy,
 He vreet's like that to hod his kindly hert ;
 Fan he was cairryin' on the nicht wi' Mary,
 It micht hae been yoursel', for a' the airt.
 He sat an' dried his nepkin there an' jokit,
 An' aye as gweed's he gied she gar't him tak',
 But, fegs, she got the reid face fan he yokit
 To speer aboot her plans fan ye cam' back.

An' ilka day afore he taks his denner,
 He 's doon the closs to see if Postie 's come,
 An' brawly we can tell ye fae his menner
 Foo things are gyaun atween the sea an'
 Somme.

Upo' the bed-lids i' the ben, wi' batter
 He 's stucken maps, a' jobbit owre wi' flags,
 An' gin the Gordons gar the Germans scatter,
 Ye 'd think he 'd deen 't himsel', the wye he
 brags.

48 HAIRY HEARS FAE HAME

Mary the Lass.

My sodger laad, set on till't by your mither,
 I 'm eekin' oot her letter wi' a line,
 Till Sandy's free to see me throu' the heather,—
 He 's never sweer to convoy 'Hairy's queyn.'
 Your father's creepin' doon, but aye keeps
 cheery,
 An' tyauves awa', fae mornin' on till mirk ;
 Lang-lies are nae for him, hooever weary,
 Nae winner fyles he's gantin' i' the kirk.

Your mither wyves, to haud her aff the thinkin',
 The sheath is seldom fae her apron string,
 But shank's ye like, it's nae like men wi'
 drinkin',

It disna ease the hert nor sorrow ding.
 There's only ae thing ilka day that maitters,
 An' that's gin ony news has come fae you ;
 An', O my laad, there's bits fyles in your letters
 I'd gie a lot to get by wurd o' mou'.

Sandy—a nickum thon.

Hairy, ye beggar, fegs an' ye're the buckie,
 Bidin' awa' sae lang,—but ach ! we ken
 The aul'est sons are aye the anes that's lucky,
 They aye come first, an' get the far'est ben.

HAIRY HEARS FAE HAME 49

Here 's me, that 's cairryin' on the ferm an'
wirkin',

An' a' I get for that 's my claes an' kail,
While ye 're oot there, jist sheetin' guns an'
dirkin',

An' riftin' owre your raffy beef an' ale.

Come hame, min; saddle doon an' mairry Mary,—
Oonless ye 're lair't in some saft bog in
France ;

We hear ye 're pushin' on, but are ye, Hairy ?
It 's time they gied hiz younger chaps a
chance.

At onyrate, to shame the coordy footers,
That winna list, fooever great the need,
Sen' something hame, to show them at the
sooter's,—

A weel-cloured German helmet or a heid.

FURTH AGAIN

YE 'RE hardly hame till furth again
It's buckle the brogues an' fare
To the wearimost ends o' the earth again,
An' the wark that is waitin' there.
Ye are keen to gang, but it's lane an' lang
Lies ever the ootwith track,
An' it's guid to mind there are frien's behind
Aye wishin' ye weel,—an' back.

GLOSSARY

Antrin, occasional.

Back it, address it.

Baillie, cattleman.

Batter, paste.

Bed-lids, doors of box-bed.

Beet, bet.

Beld, bald.

Bessin', singing bass.

Bick, bitch.

Birn, burden.

Birss, bristles.

Birze, squeeze.

Bleck, *bleckin'*, black, blacking.

Boukit, large, bulky.

Bow-cheer, armchair.

Branks, halter.

Breet, brute.

Britchin, portion of harness.

Broke, became bankrupt.

Bucht, a sheep or cattle-fold.

Buckie, refractory or mischievous person.

Buff, nonsense.

Byous, exceedingly, out of the common.

Caff, chaff.

Can, ability.

Cankert, ill-humoured, fretful.

Cantle, to lift or brighten up.



- Carritches*, catechism.
Caur, calves.
Chafts, chops.
Chapper, beetle for mashing potatoes.
Claik, gossip.
Cleuch, narrow glen, ravine.
Clog-fit, club-foot.
Coggin', feeding from the cog or wooden pail.
Connach, to waste, to destroy.
Coordy-lick, coward's blow.
Cotts, petticoats.
Crap o' the wa', highest part of an inside wall.
Creeshy, greasy.
Curn, a quantity of indefinite size or number.
Cyauwd, tinker, sturdy beggar.
- Darg*, a day's work.
Daud, a heavy blow.
Deese, a long wooden settle.
Dell't, dug.
Diddlin', singing in a low tone without words.
Ding, a blow, to dash down.
Diridin', onslaught.
Dook, bathe.
Dottle, the unconsumed tobacco remaining in a pipe.
Dreels, drills.
Dubbit, muddied.
Dunt, a blow.
Dwaam, a faint.
Dweeble, weak.
- Eekin'*, adding to.
- Feerin'*, the furrow drawn out to mark the 'rigs'
before ploughing the whole field.

Fegs, an interjection ; used for 'faith.'

Fell't, knocked down.

Ferny-tickled, freckled.

Ferrier, farrier, veterinary surgeon.

Fite the idle pin, a way of passing time.

Fleggit, frightened.

Fleyed, frightened.

Foonert, foundered, broken down.

Footers, a term of contempt.

Foumart, polecat.

Frem't, strangers ; foreigners.

Furth, forth, the open air.

Fussle, whistle.

Futtrat, weasel.

Fyle, while.

Gant, yawn.

Geet, child.

Girnin', snarling.

Girse, grass.

Graip, three or four-pronged fork used in farming.

Grumlie, fault-finding.

Gurk, a fat short person.

Gype, a fool.

Haims, curved pieces of iron attached to horse's collar

Hale an' fere, whole and entire.

Heelster-gowdie, heels over head.

Heexe, to lift, to exalt.

Henched, to launch missiles by striking the hand against
the thigh.

Hirle, to move with grazing or friction.

Hiz, us.

Hoast, cough.

Hochs, lower part of thighs.

Howdie, midwife.

Howes, hollows.

Hunker, to squat on the haunches.

Hurb, a term of contempt.

Hyow, hoe.

Jobbit, pricked.

Jyle, gaol.

Kain, rent paid in kind.

Kittle, excitable, quick-tempered.

Knock, clock.

Kyte, belly.

Laich, low.

Lair't, stuck in mud.

Ley, grass land.

Loan, piece of uncultivated land about a homestead.

Lowsin', leaving off work.

Lyaug, gossip.

Lythe, shelter.

Mant, stutter.

Mask, to infuse tea.

Mauger, in spite of.

Mochie, muggy.

Mornin', morning dram.

Mou', mouth.

Neiper, neighbour.

Nickum, mischievous boy.

On-ding, a heavy fall of rain or snow.

Oxter-staffs, crutches.

Pechin', panting.
Peer-hoose, work-house.
Pig, earthenware jar.
Ploy, escapade.
Port, a lively tune on the bagpipes.
Pu'in', pulling.
Pyoch'rin', coughing.

Quake, heifer.
Queets, ankles.
Queyn, young woman.
Quyte, coat.

Raffy, plentiful.
Raith, quarter of a year.
Raxed, stretched.
Reistin', restive.
Rippit, uproar.
Roch, rough.
Roustin', rusting.
Rowe, roll.
Runt, withered hag.

Shackle-bane, wrist-bone.
Shank, knitting, to knit.
Sheath, holder for needles during knitting.
Shoudin', swinging.
Skice, to run off quickly.
Skull, a wicker basket.
Slype, worthless fellow.
Smore, smother.
Snorl, a difficulty.
Snytin', blowing the nose with finger and thumb.
Soosht, punished.
Sooter, cobbler.

Soss, a mess.
Sough, rumour, sound of wind.
Spring, a tune.
Squeel, school.
Stank, pond, ditch.
Steek, stitch.
Stroud, senseless silly song.
Stucken, stuck.
Swak, supple.
Sweeties, *readin'*, conversation lozenges.
Sweir, lazy.

Tack, lease.
Taits, locks, small portions.
Teels, tools.
Teuch, tough.
Thow, thaw.
Thraw, twist.
Threepit, insisted.
Trauchlin', draggling.
Trued, played truant.
Trumpe, jew's harp.
Tyauve, a struggle.

Verge, watch with verge movement.

Warsle, to wrestle, to strive.
Wastrie, a waste.
Wydes, weeds.
Wytin', blame.
Wyvin', knitting, weaving.







