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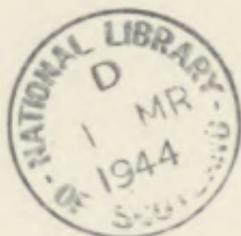
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THE
SCOTTISH POEMS
OF VIOLET JACOB

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TO THE COMRADE BEYOND

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V. J.

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THE HOWE O' THE MEARNS

Laddie, my lad, when ye gang at the tail o' the plough
An' the days draw in,
When the burnin' yellow's awa' that was aince alowe
On the braes o' whin,
Do ye mind o' me that's deaved wi' the wearyfu' south
An' its puir consairns
While the weepies * fade on the knowes at the river's mouth
In the Howe o' the Mearns?

There was nae twa lads frae the Grampians doon to the
Tay
That could best us twa ;
At bothie or dance, or the field on a fitba' day,
We could sort them a' ;
An' at courtin'-time when the stars keeked doon on the glen
An' its theek † o' fairns,
It was you an' me got the pick o' the basket then
In the Howe o' the Mearns.

London is fine, an' for ilk o' the lasses at hame
There'll be saxty here,
But the springtime comes an' the hairst—an it's aye the
same
Through the changefu' year.
Oh, a lad thinks lang o' hame ere he thinks his fill
An' his breid he airns—
An' they're thrashin' noo at the white fairm up on the hill
In the Howe o' the Mearns.

Gin I mind mysel' an' toil for the lave o' my days
While I've een to see,
When I'm auld an' done wi' the fash o' their English ways
I'll win hame to dee ;
For the lad dreams aye o' the prize that the man'll get,
But he lives an' lairns,
An' it's far, far ayont him still—but it's farther yet
To the Howe o' the Mearns.

* ragweed

† thatch

Laddie, my lad, when the hair is white on yer pow
An' the work's put past,
When yer hand's owre auld an' heavy to haud the
plough
I'll win hame at last,
And we'll bide our time on the knowes whaur the broom
stands braw
An' we played as bairns,
Till the last lang gloamin' shall creep on us baith an' fa'
On the Howe o' the Mearns.

THE HEID HORSEMAN

O Alec, up at Soutar's fairm,
You that's sae licht o' he'rt,
I ken ye passin' by the tune
Ye whustle i' the cairt ;

I ken the rowin' o' the wheels,
The clank o' haims an' chain,
And set abune yer stampin' team
I see ye sit yer lane.

Ilk morn agin' the kindlin' sky
Yer liftit heid is black,
Ilk nicht I watch ye hameward ride
Wi' the sunset at yer back.

For wark's yer meat and wark's yer play,
Heid horseman though ye be,
Ye've ne'er a glance for wife nor maid,
Ye tak' nae tent o' me.

And man, ye'll no suspec' the truth,
Tho' weel I ken it's true ;
There's mony ane that trails in silk
Wha fain wad gang wi' you.

But I am just a serving-lass
That toils to get her breid,
And oh ! ye're sweir * to see the gowd
I braid about my heid.

My cheek is like the brier rose
That scents the simmer wind,
And fine I'd keep the wee bit hoose
Gin I'd a man to mind !

It's sair to see, when ilka lad
Is dreamin' o' his joe,
The bonnie mear that leads yer team
Is a' ye're thinkin' o'.

Like fire upon her satin coat
Ye gar the harness shine,
But laddie, there's a safer licht
In thae twa een o' mine !

Aye, wark yer best—but youth is short,
An' shorter ilka year—
There's ane wad gar ye sune forget
Yon limmer o' a mear !

* slow, lazy

THE GUIDWIFE SPEAKS

Guidman, ye sit aside the lum
Sookin' yer pipe, yer doag at heel,
And gin the Lord should strike ye dumb
Wha'd be the waur,* ye soor auld deil?
And wha wad ken the dandy lad
That, at the preachin', socht ma ee,
When twa poond ten was a' we had
And ye was cried in Kirk wi' me?

Sae soople and sae licht o' fit!
The smairtest carles their pranks nicht try,
They got nae profit oot o' it—
Nane thocht o' them when ye was by!
They'd step, o' Sawbaths, tae the bell,
Their gravats braw wi' spots and stripes,
But there was nane forbye yersel'
Could dance curduddich tae the pipes.

I'm risin' airly, workin' late;
The best o' bannocks tae yer tea
Gangs doon yer craig † like leaves in spate,
But ne'er a word o' thanks tae me!
And here, oot-by, the teuchats ‡ greet,
Dumb is the hoose through a' the day—
Ye'll maybe speak tae curse yer meat
Or dunt yer pipe agin' yer tae.

An' yet, an' yet, I dreid tae see
The ingle standin' toom §; oh, then
Youth's last left licht wad gang wi' ye—
What wad I dae? I dinna ken.

* worse † throat ‡ plover § empty

THE LAD I' THE MUNE

I

O gin I lived i' the gowden mune
Like the mannie that smiles at me,
I'd sit a' nicht in my hoose abune
And the wee-bit stars they wad ken me sune,
For I'd sup my brose wi' a gowden spune
And they wad come out to see !

II

For weel I ken that the mune's his ain
And he is the maister there ;
A' nicht he's lauchin', for, fegs, there's nane
To draw the blind on his windy-pane
And tak an' bed him, to lie his lane
And pleasure himsel' nae mair.

III

Says I to Grannie, " Keek * up the glen
Abune by the rowan tree,
There's a braw lad yont i' the mune, ye ken."
Says she, " Awa' wi' ye, bairn, gang ben,
For noo it's little I fash wi' men
An' it's less that they fash wi' me ! "

IV

When I'm as big as the tinkler-man
That sings i' the loan a' day,
I'll bide wi' him i' the tinkler-van
Wi' a wee-bit pot an' a wee-bit pan ;
But I'll no tell Grannie my bonnie plan,
For I dinna ken what she'll say.

V

And, nicht by nicht, we will a' convene
And we'll be a cantie three ;
We'll lauch an' crack i' the loanin' green,
The kindest billies † that ever was seen,
The tinkler-man wi' his twinklin' een
And the lad i' the mune an' me !

* glance

† comrades

THE MUCKLE MOU'

When ye are auld an' pitten past,
Ye'll whiles be sittin' wi' a freen'
And crackin', as ye hear the blast
Rage i' the lum, o' fowk ye've seen.
There's some gangs whingein',* singin' sma',
An' some that taks a baulder tune,
But ae thing's aye the same wi' a'—
Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

Ye'll see a lad—his hoose the best,
A thrivin' swine intill his yaird,
His gairden fu'—he winna rest,
He's daft because he's no a laird !
He coorts a lass ; she'll tak her aith
He isna fit to dicht her shune.†
What's wrang wi' ane is wrang wi' baith—
Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

O' tinkler-fowk, an' fowk wi' means,
Ye'll scarcely hae the time to speak,
Men, wives an' widdies, lords an' weans,
The mair they get, the mair they'll seek.
Ye'd think the verra warld was deav'd ‡
Wi' them that's roarin' for the mune.
Nae maitter what they've a' receiv'd,
Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

But when ye've lookit mony a year
Upon yersel' and ither men,
Although to lairn ye've whiles been sweir,
There's twa-three things ye're like to ken ;
Ye winna need to mak ado
An' warstle wi' the powers abune,
Yer spune's the measure o' yer mou',
Gin ane is wrang, it's no the spune !

* whining † wipe her boots ‡ deafened

THE DOO'COT UP THE BRAES

Beside the doo'cot up the braes
The fields slope doon frae me,
And fine's the glint on blawin' days
O' the bonnie plains o' sea.

Below's my mither's hoosie sma',
The smiddy by the byre
Whaur aye my feyther dings awa'
And my brither blaws the fire.

For Lachlan lo'es the smiddy's reek,
An' Geordie's but a fule
Wha drives the plough his breid to seek,
And Rob's to teach the schule ;

He'll haver roond the schulehoose wa's,
And ring the schulehoose bell,
He'll skelp the scholars wi' the tawse
(I'd like that fine mysel' !)

They're easy pleased, my brithers three—
I hate the smiddy's lowe,
A weary dominie I'd be,
An' I canna thole the plough.

But by the doo'cot up the braes
There's nane frae me can steal
The blue sea an' the ocean haze
An' the ships I like sae weel.

The brigs ride out past Ferryden
Ahint the girnin' tugs,
And the lasses wave to the Baltic men
Wi' the gowd rings i' their lugs.

My mither's sweir to let me gang,
My feyther gies me blame ;
But youth is sair and life is lang
When yer he'rt's sae far frae hame.

But i' the doo'cot up the braes,
When a'tumn nichts are mirk,
I've hid my pennies an' my claes
An' the Buik I read at kirk,

An' come ae nicht when a' fowks sleep,
I'll lift them whaur they lie,
An' to the harbour-side I'll creep
I' the dim licht o' the sky ;

An' when the eastern blink * grows wide,
An' dark still smoors † the west,
A Baltic brig will tak the tide
Wi' a lad that canna rest !

* beam

† smothers

A CHANGE O' DEILS

A change o' deils is lightsome.
(*Scots proverb.*)

My grannie spent a merry youth,
She never wanted for a joe,
An' gin she tell't me aye the truth,
Richt little was't she kentna o'.

An' whiles afore she gaed awa'
Tae bed her doon below the grass,
Says she, " Guidmen I've kistit * twa,
But a change o' deils is lightsome, lass ! "

Sae dinna think tae maister me,
For Scotland's fu' o' brawlike chiels,
And aiblins † ither fowk ye'll see
That's fine an' pleased tae change their deils.

Aye, set yer bonnet on yer heid
And cock it up upon yer bree, †
O' a' yer tricks ye'll hae some need
Afore ye get the best o' me !

Sma' wark tae fill yer place I'd hae—
I'll seek a sweethe'rt i' the toon
Or cast my he'rt across the Spey
An' tak some pridefu' Hieland loon.

I ken a man wi' hoose and land,
His airm is stoot, his een are blue,
A ring o' gowd is on his hand
An' he's a bonnier man nor you !

* confined

† perhaps

‡ brow

But hoose an' gear an' land an' mair,
He'd gie them a' tae get the preen
That preen'd the flowers intill my hair
Beside the may-bush, yestereen.

Just tak you tent * ; and mind, forbye,
The heap o' sense my grannie had ;
My grannie's dochter's bairn am I
And a change o' deils is lichtsome, lad !

* *tak tent*—pay attention.

TAM I' THE KIRK

O Jean, my Jean, when the bell ca's the congregation
O'er valley and hill wi' the ding frae its iron mou',
When a'boddy's thochts is set on their ain salvation,
Mine's set on you.

There's a reid rose lies on the Buik o' the Word afore ye
That was growin' braw on its bush at the keek o' day,
But the lad that pu'd yon flower i' the mornin's glory
He canna pray.

He canna pray, but there's nane i' the kirk will heed him
Whaur he sits sae still his lane at the side o' the wa',
For nane but the reid rose kens what my lassie gied him—
It and us twa.

He canna sing for the sang that his ain he'rt raises,
He canna see for the mist that's afore his een,
And a voice droons the hale o' the psalms and the para-
phrases

Crying "Jean ! Jean ! Jean !"

THE GOWK *

I see the Gowk an' the Gowk sees me
Beside a berry-bush by the aipple-tree.
(Old Scots rhyme.)

'Tib my auntie's a deil to wark,
Has me risin' afore the sun ;
Aince her heid is abune her sark
Then the clash o' her tongue's begun !
Warslin', steerin' wi' hens an' swine,
Naucht kens she o' a freend o' mine—
But the gowk that bides i' the woods o' Dun
He kens him fine !

Past the yaird an' ahint the stye,
Oh, the aipples grow bonnilie !
Tib, my auntie, she canna spy
Wha comes creepin' to kep † wi' me.
Aye ! she'd sort him, for, dod, she's fell !
Whisht now, Jimmie, an' hide yersel',
An' the wise-like bird i' the aipple-tree
He winna tell !

Aprile-month, or the aipples flower,
Tib, my auntie, will rage an' ca' ;
Jimmie lad, she may rin an' glower—
What care I ? We'll be far awa' !
Let her seek me the leelang day,
Wha's to tell her the road we'll gae ?
For the cannie gowk, tho' he kens it a',
He winna say !

* cuckoo

† meet

THE GEAN TREES *

I mind, when I dream at nicht,
Whaur the bonnie Sidlaws stand
Wi' their feet on the dark'nin' land
And their heids i' the licht ;
And the thochts o' youth roll back
Like wreaths frae the hillside track
In the Vale of Strathmore ;
And the autumn leaves are turnin'
And the flame o' the gean trees burnin'
Roond the white hoose door.

Aye me, when spring cam' green
And May-month decked the shaws
There was scarce a blink o' the wa's
For the flower o' the gean ;
But when the hills were blue
Ye could see them glintin' through
And the sun i' the lift † ;
And the flower o' the gean trees fa'in'
Was like pairls frae the branches snawin'
In a lang white drift.

Thae trees are fair and gay
When May-month's in her prime,
But I'm thrawn wi' the blasts o' time
And my heid's white as they ;
But an auld man aye thinks lang
O' the haughs he played amang
In his braw youth-tide ;
And there's ane that aye keeps yearnin'
For a hoose whaur the leaves are turnin'
And the flame o' the gean tree burnin'
By the Sidlaws' side.

* wild cherry trees

† sky

THE LAST O' THE TINKLER

Lay me in yon place, lad,
The gloamin's thick wi' nicht ;
I canna see yer face, lad,
For my een's no richt.
But it's owre late for leein'
An' I ken fine I'm deein',
Like an auld crow fleein'
Tae the last o' the licht.

The kye gang tae the byre, lad,
The sheep tae the fauld,
Ye'll mak a spunk o' fire, lad,
For my he'rt's turned cauld ;
And whaur the trees are meetin'
There's a soond like waters beatin',
An' the bird seems near tae greetin'
That was aye singin' bauld.

There's just the tent tae leave, lad,
I've gaither'd little gear,
There's just yersel' tae grieve, lad,
And the auld dog here ;
But when the morn comes creepin'
And the waukin' birds are cheepin'
It'll find me lyin' sleepin'
As I've slept saxty year.

Ye'll rise tae meet the sun, lad,
And baith be trayv'lin' west,
But me that's auld an' done, lad,
I'll bide an' tak my rest ;
For the grey heid is bendin'
And the auld shune's needin' mendin',
But the trayv'lin's near its endin',
An' the end's aye the best.

THE CROSS-ROADS

- “ Wha bides in yon hoose we hae tae pass
Yont—div ye see it? ”
- “ *There’s nae hoose there. It’s a theek o’ grass
And auld stanes wi’ it.* ”
- “ But oh ! yon thing by the wa’ that lurks !
Is it soond or sicht ? ”
- “ *It’s just the breith o’ the grazin’ stirks
Or the white haar * crawlin’ amang the birks wi’ the fa’ o’
nicht.* ”
- “ There’s a windy keekin’ amang the thorn
And the branches thrawin— ”
- “ *’Twill be tae seek when the morn’s morn
Comes tae the dawin’ !* ”
- “ But man, foo † that ? For it’s there the noo,
And I see it plain— ”
- “ *Gin ye be sober, I doot I’m fou,
For I see nane.* ”
- “ There’s an auld wife’s lee that I fain wad loss,
Sae sair I fear it,
O’ an ill man’s hoose whaur the twa roads cross
And his lair ‡ that’s near it ;
Yet gin ye’ll meet him by birk or broom
Ye canna tell— ”
- “ *It’s nocht but havers. The road is toom,
And there’s nane ye’ll meet sic a nicht o’ gloom, but just mysel’.* ”
- “ But bide a wee till we kneel and pray,
For I’d fain be prayin’.”
- “ *Stand up, stand up—for I daurna’ say
The words ye’re sayin’ !
But rise and gang tae the kirkyaird heid
And plead yer best
Whaur they wadna bury the ootcast deid
For a sad saul spent wi’ the weird it’s dree’d, and I’ll maybe
rest !* ”

* sea-mist

† how

‡ grave

THE LIGHT NIGHTS

Ye've left the sun an' the can'le-licht an' the starlicht,
The woods baith green and sere,
And yet I hear ye singin' doon the braes
I' the licht nichts o' the year.

Ye were sae glad ; ye were aye sae like the laverock
Wha's he'rt is i' the lift ;
Nae mair for you the young green leaves will dance
Nor yet the auld anes drift.

What thocht had you o' the ill-faured dairk o' winter
But the ingle-neuks o' hame ?
Love lit yer way an' played about yer feet
Year in, year oot, the same.

And noo my best, my bonniest and my dearest,
I'll lay ma he'rt tae sleep
And let the warld, that has nae soond for me,
Its watch o' silence keep.

But, whiles and whiles, i' the can'le-licht an' the starlicht
I'll wauken it to hear
The liltin' voice that's singin' doon the braes
I' the licht nichts o' the year.

THE GANGREL

It's ye maun whustle for a breeze
Until the sails be fu' ;
They bigg yon ships that ride the seas
To pleasure fowk like you.

For ye hae siller i' yer hand
And a' that gowd can buy,
But weary, in a weary land,
A gangrel-loon am I.

Ye'll feel the strang tides lift an' toss
The scud o' nor'land faem,
And when ye drap the Southern Cross
It's a' roads lead ye hame.

And ye shall see the shaws o' broom
Wave on the windy hill,
Along the strath the hairst-fields toom
And syne the stackyards fill.

Ye'll hear fu' mony a raittin' cairt
On Forfar's causey-croon,*
Wi' young stirks loupin' to the mairt
That roars in Forfar toon.

O' nichts, ayont yer snibbet door,
Ye'll see in changeless band,
Abune Craig Oule, to keep Strathmore,
The stars of Scotland stand.

But tho' ye think ye sicht them fine,
Gang ben an' tak' yer rest,
Frae lands that niver kent their shine
It's me that sees them best !

* the middle of the street

For they shall brak their ancient trust,
Shall rise nae mair nor set,
The Sidlaw hills be laid in dust
— Afore that I forget.

Lowse ye the windy-sneck a wheen,
An' glowre frae ilka airt.
Fegs ! Ye may see them wi' yer een—
I see them wi' my he'rt !

THE BEADLE O' DRUMLEE

Them that's as highly placed as me
(Wha am the beadle o' Drumlee)
Should na be prood, nor yet owre free.

Me an' the meenister, ye ken,
Are no the same as a' thae men
We hae for neebours i' the glen.

The Lord gied him some lairnin' sma'
And me guid sense abune them a',
And them nae wits to ken wha's wha.

Ye'd think, to hear the lees they tell,
The Sawbath day could mind itsel'
Withoot a hand to rug the bell.

Ye'd think the Reverend Patrick Broun
Could ca' the Bible up an' doon
An' loup his lane intill his goon.

Whiles, gin he didna get frae me
The wiselike word I weel can gie,
Whaur wad the puir bit callant be ?

The elders, Ross an' Weellum Aird,
An' fowk like Alexander Caird,
That think they're cocks o' ilka yaird,

Fegs-aye ! they'd na be sweir to rule
A lad sae newly frae the schule
Gin *my* auld bonnet crooned a fule !

But oh ! Jehovah's unco' kind !
Whaur wad this doited pairish find
A man wi' sic a powerfu' mind ?

Sae, let the pairish sleep at night
Blind wi' the elders' shinin' licht,
Nor ken wha's hand keeps a' things richt.

It's what they canna understan',
That brains hae ruled since time began,
An' that *the beadle* is the man !

THE HELPMATE

I hae nae gear, nae pot nor pan,
Nae lauchin' lips hae I ;
Forbye yersel' there's ne'er a man
Looks roond as I gang by.

And a' fowk kens nae time I've gied
Tae daft strathspey and reel,
Nor idle sang nor ploy,* for dreid
O' pleasurin' the deil.

Wi' muckle care ma mither bred
Her bairn in wisdom's way ;
Come Tyesday first, when we are wed,
A wiselike wife ye'll hae.

The best ye'll get, baith but an' ben,
Sae mild an' douce I'll be ;
Yer hame'll be yer haven when
Ye're married upon me.

Ye'll find the kettle on the fire,
The hoose pit a' tae richts,
And yer heid in the troch at the back o' the byre
When ye come back fu' o' nichts.

* spree

THE NEEBOUR

Auld Kate's awa'. November-month
They laid her oot an' got her kistit
And had her pitten east the kirk
(There wasna ane that wad hae miss'd it !)
Her door is lockit, cauld's the lum,
There's nane tae gang and nane tae come.

Her yett * hangs rattlin' i' the wind,
The tattie-shaws are black and rotten,
For wha's tae lift them ? " Let them bide,"
The neebours say, " she's best forgotten."
They'll tell ye that her hoose is toom,
Forbye the rats in ilka room.

'Twixt her and me was just the wa',
A when o' bricks oor hames dividit,
This lanesome loanin' held us baith,
My but-an-ben wi' hers aside it ;
But ne'er a wean cam' nigh the place
For dreid he'd see her evil face.

The verra doags gaed fleein' by,
And, gin that Kate was oot an' tryin'
Tae cast a bodle † till a tink,
He wadna touch't—he'd leave it lyin' !
Mysel', I let sic havers be.
I didna care a curse—no me.

But noo—but noo—I wauk o' nichts
And smoor my heid ; I daurna lift it
Lest yont the wa' there comes a soond
O' ane that's deid but hasna shiftit
And aye seeks hameward through the mirk—
She'll no lie easy by the kirk !

* gate

† very small coin

And when my workin' day is by
 I seek my door as daylight's deein',
 It's sweir I am tae lift my een,
 I'm like the bairns—I'm no for seein' !
 Lord mind o' me—I ken there's ane
 At the dairk side o' the windy-pane !

THE NEEP-FIELDS BY THE SEA

Ye'd wonder foo the seasons rin
 This side o' Tweed an' Tyne ;
 The hairst's awa' ; October-month
 Cam in a whilie syne,
 But the stooks are oot in Scotland yet,
 There's green upon the tree,
 And oh ! what grand's the smell ye'll get
 Frae the neep-fields by the sea !

The lang lift lies abune the warld,
 On ilka windless day
 The ships creep doon the ocean line
 Sma' on the band o' grey ;
 And the lang sigh heaved upon the sand
 Comes pechin' * up tae me
 And speils † the cliffs tae whaur ye stand
 I' the neep-fields by the sea.

Oh, time's aye slow, tho' time gangs fast
 When siller's a' tae mak',
 An' deith, afore ma poke ‡ is fu'
 May grip me i' the back ;
 But ye'll tak' ma banes an' my Sawbath braws,
 Gin deith's ower smairt for me,
 And set them up amang the shaws
 I' the lang rows plantit atween the wa's,
 A tattie-dulie § for fleggin' craws
 I' the neep-fields by the sea.

* panting † climbs ‡ pocket § scarecrow

THE END O'T

There's a fine braw thistle that lifts its croon
By the river-bank whaur the ashes stand,
An' the swirl o' water comes whisp'rin' doon
Past birk an' bramble an' grazin' land.
But simmer's flittit an' time's no heedin'
A feckless lass nor a pridefu' flow'r ;
The dark to hide me's the grace I'm needin'.
An' the thistle's seedin',
An' my day's owre.

I redd * the hoose an' I meat the hens
(Oh, it's ill to wark when ye daurna tire !),
An' what'll I get when my mither kens
It's niver a maiden that biggs her fire ?
I mind my pray'rs, but I'm feared to say them,
I hide my een, for they're greetin' fast ;
What though I blind them—for wha wad hae them ?
The licht's gaen frae them
An' my day's past.

Oh, wha taks tent for a fadin' cheek ?
No him, I'se warrant, that gar'd it fade !
There's little love for a lass to seek
When the coortin's through an' the price is paid.
Oh, aince forgotten's forgotten fairly,
An' heavy endit what's licht begun,
But God forgie ye an' keep ye, Chairlie,
For the nicht's fa'en airly
An' my day's done !

* tidy

CRAIGO WOODS

Craigie Woods, wi' the splash o' the cauld rain beatin'
I' the back end o' the year,
When the clouds hang laigh wi' the wecht o' their load
o' greetin'
And the autumn wind's asteer ;
Ye may stand like ghaists, ye may fa' i' the blast that's
cleft ye
To rot i' the chilly dew,
But when will I mind on aucht since the day I left ye
Like I mind on you—on you ?

Craigie Woods, i' the licht o' September sleepin'
And the saft mist o' the morn,
When the hairst climbs to yer feet, an' the sound o'
reapin'
Comes up frae the stookit corn,
And the braw reid puddock-stules are like jewels blinkin
And the bramble happs ye baith.
O what do I see, i' the lang nicht, lyin' an' thinkin'
As I see yer wraith—yer wraith ?

There's a road to a far-aff land, an' the land is yonder
Whaur a' men's hopes are set ;
We dinna ken foo lang we maun hae to wander,
But we'll a' win till it yet ;
An' gin there's woods o' fir an' the licht atween them,
I winna speir its name,
But I'll lay me doon by the puddock-stules when I've
seen them,
An' I'll cry " I'm hame—I'm hame ! "

BONNIE JOANN

We've stookit the hairst an' we're needin'
To gaither it in,
Syne, gin the morn's dry, we'll be leadin'
An' wark'll begin ;
But noo I'll awa doon the braeside
My lane, while I can—
Wha kens wha he'll meet by the wayside,
My bonnie Joann ?

East yonder the hairst-fields are hidin'
The sea frae my een,
Gin ye keek whaur the stooks are dividin'
Ye'll see it atween.
Sae douce an' sae still it has sleepit
Since hairst-time began,
Like my he'rt—gin ye'd tak it an' keep it,
My bonnie Joann.

Owre a'thing the shadows gang trailin',
Owre stubble an' strae ;
Frae the hedge to the fit o' the pailin'
They rax * owre the way ;
But the sun may gang through wi' his beamin'
An' trayvel his span,
For aye, by the licht o' my dreamin',
I see ye, Joann.

Awa' frae ye, naebody's braver,
Mair wise-like an' bauld,
Aside ye, I hech an' I haver,
I'm het an' I'm cauld ;
But oh ! could I tell wi'out speakin'
The he'rt o' a man,
Ye micht find I'm the lad that ye're seekin',
My bonnie Joann !

* stretch

WHEN MYSIE GAED UP THE STAIR

Nae mair the dusty mill-hoose hums,
 The smiddy's toom and hame's the miller,
 Abune the reek o' kirkton lums .
 The young mune's like a threid o' siller ;
 But through the Bonnie Bush's door
 Ye'll hear a soond that sets ye thinkin'
 And weel-kent steps across the floor
 And sangs an' freends an' glasses clinkin'—
 The mune will sune be sinkin' and hae nae tales tae
 bear,
 Sae haste ye awa' wi' me, Jock, for Mysie's gaen up the
 stair !

We'll slip along tae whaur ye ken
 Afore this cannie gloamin' passes,
 And aince amang oor fellow men
 The deil may tak baith wives and lasses ;
 The stars will drap ayont the hill
 An' Charlewayne * turn tapsalteerie,
 Fu' mony a lad hae got his fill
 And gane his gait or we be weary ;
 An' tho' the morn be eerie, it's little for that we'll care,
 Nae billies like you an' me, Jock, since Mysie gaed up
 the stair !

And when we hear the crawin' cock
 And a' the eastern airt is clearin',
 Ye'll no desairt a neebour, Jock,
 An' syne ye'll tak a haund at steerin' ;
 We'll dae oor best tae breist the brae
 Afore yon fleerin' † sun has keekit
 Tae watch us tak oor hameward way
 And maybe miss it when we seek it.
 And though ma door be steekit, † I ken that ye'll land
 me there—
*But haste ye awa an' flee, Jock, when Mysie comes doon
 the stair !*

* constellation of the Plough † jeering † shut

THE POACHER TO ORION

November-month is wearin' by,
The leaves is nearly doon ;
I watch ye stride along the sky
O' nichts, my beltit loon.

The treetaps wi' their fingers bare
Spread between me and you,
But weel in yonder frosty air
Ye see me keekin' through.

At schule I lairnd richt wearilie,
The Hunter was yer name ;
Sma' pleasure were ye then tae me,
But noo oor trade's the same.

But ye've a brawer job nor mine
And better luck nor me,
For them that sees ye likes ye fine
And the pollis * lets ye be ;

We're baith astir when men's asleep ;
A hunter aye pursued,
I hae by dyke an' ditch tae creep,
But ye gang safe an' prood.

What maitter that? I'll no complain,
For when we twa are met
We hae the nicht-watch for oor ain
Till the stars are like tae set.

Gang on, my lad. The warlds owreheid
Wheel on their nichtly beat,
And ye'll mind ye as the skies ye treid
O' the brither at yer feet.

* police

THE LANG ROAD

Below the braes o' heather, and far along the glen,
The road rins southward, southward, that grips the
souls o' men,
That draws their fitsteps aye awa' frae hearth and frae
fauld,
That pairts ilk freen' frae ither, and the young frae the
auld.
And whiles I stand at mornin' and whiles I stand at
nicht,
To see it through the ghaisty gloom, gang slippin' oot
o' sicht ;
There's mony a lad will ne'er come back amang his ain
to lie,
An' it's lang, lang waitin' till the time gangs by.

And far ayont the bit o' sky that lies abune the hills,
There is the black toon standin' mid the roarin' o' the
mills.
Whaur the reek frae mony engines hangs atween it and
the sun
And the lives are weary, weary, that are just begun.
Doon yon lang road that winds awa' my ain three sons
they went,
They turned their faces southward frae the glens they
aye had kent,
And twa will never see the hills wi' livin' een again,
An' it's lang, lang waitin' while I sit my lane.

For ane lies whaur the grass is high abune the gallant
deid,
And ane whaur England's mighty ships sail proud abune
his heid,
They couldna sleep mair saft at hame, the twa that
sairved their king,
Were they laid aside their ain kirk yett, i' the flower o'
the ling.

But whaur the road is twistin' through yon streets o'
care an' sin,
My third braw son toils nicht and day for the gowd he
fain would win,
Whaur ilka man grapes i' the dark to get his neebour's
share,
An' it's lang, lang strivin' i' the mirk that's there.

The cen o' love can pierce the mools that hide a sodger's
grave,
An' love that doesna heed the sod will neither hear the
wave,
But it canna see ayont the cloud that hauds my youngest
doon
Wi' its mist o' greed an' sorrow i' the smokin' toon.
And whiles, when through the open door there fades the
dein' licht,
I think I hear my ain twa men come up the road at nicht ;
But him that bides the nearest seems the furthest aye
frae me—
And it's lang, lang listenin' till I hear the three !

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

My daddy turns him tae the sky
And cries on me tae see
Thae shiftin' beams that dance oot-by
And fleg * the he'rt o' me.
“ *Laddie, the north is a' alowe*
Wi' fires o' siller-green,
The stars are dairk owre Windyknowe
That were sae bricht the streen.

The left is fu' o' wings o' licht
Risin' an' deein' doon—”
“ Rax you yer airm and haud it ticht
Aboot yer little loon,
For oh ! the North's an eerie land,
And eerie voices blaw
Frae whaur the ghaists o' deid men stand
Wi' their feet amangst the snaw.

And owre their heids the midnight sun
Hangs like a croon o' flame :
It's i' the north yon licht's begun
And I'm fear'd that it's the same !
O haud me ticht ! Oh, div ye ken
Gin sic-like things can be
That's past the sicht o' muckle men
And nane but bairns can see ? ”

* frighten

THE WHUSTLIN' LAD

There's a wind comes doon frae the braes when the
licht is spreadin'
Chilly an' grey,
An' the auld cock craws at the yett o' the muirland
steadin'
Cryin' on day ;
The hoose lies sound an' the sma' mune's deein' an'
weary
Watchin' her lane,
The shadows creep by the dyke an' the time seems eerie,
But the lad i' the fields he is whustlin' cheery, cheery,
Yont i' the rain.

My mither stirs as she wauks wi' her twa een blinkin',
Bedded she'll bide,
For foo can an auld wife ken what a lassie's thinkin'
Close at her side ?
Mither, lie still, for ye're needin' a rest fu' sairly,
Weary an' worn.
Mither, I'll rise, an' ye ken I'll be warkin' fairly—
An' I dinna ken *wha* can be whustlin', whustlin', airly,
Lang or it's morn !

Gin ye hear a sound like the sneck o' the back-door
turnin',
Fash na for it ;
It's just the crack i' the lum o' the green wood burnin',
Ill to be lit.
Gin ye hear a step, it's the auld mear loose i' the stable
Stampin' the strae,
Or mysel' that's settin' the parritch-spunes on the table ;
Sae turn ye about an' sleep, mither, sleep while ye're
able,
Rest while ye may.

Up at the steadin' the trail of the mist has liftit
 Clear frae the ground,
 Mither breathes saft an' her face to the wa' she's shiftit—
 Aye, but she's sound !
 Lad, ye may come, for there's nane but mysel' will hear
 ye
 Oot by the stair,
 But whustle you on an' I winna hae need to fear ye,
 For, laddie, the lips that keep whustlin', whustlin' cheery
 Canna dae mair !

JOHN MACFARLANE

There's a man I ca' tae mind
 Had a wit ye couldna find
 Tho' ye socht it frae the Hielands tae the Border ;
 Ne'er a carle sae dour an' teuch
 Heard his rant but Lord ! he leuch,
 Tho' at times it wasna what ye'd ca' " in order " !
 I' the smiddy standin' bare
 Whaur his hammer rings nae mair
 And there's nestin' for the sparry an' the starlin',
 There the studdy * that ye'll see
 Lyin' lost ahint a tree
 Got its licks for mony a year frae John Macfarlane.

* anvil

At the Stook o' Barley's door
 Gin ye heard them skirl an' roar,
 The cause there wasna muckle need o' speirin' ;
 And the pollis let them be,
 Kenning wha was on the spree
 And that little guid they'd get frae interferin' ;
 And when John gaed daund'rin' hame
 Tae the guidwife an' her blame,
 Weel he kent he'd get a sortin' frae the carlin' ;
 But the auld bumbees themsels,
 Fou amang the heather-bells,
 Didna sing mair loud an' bauld than John Macfarlane.

When he aince began tae crack
 Wi' the elders hangin' back
 And wisperin' it was no for them tae listen,
 Dod, they sune set doon their mugs
 Wi' their haunds ahint their lugs,
 Fear'd tae deith there was a word they micht be missin' !
 But aye there's ane or twa
 That'll whinge their time awa'
 An' get their plesure easiest frae snarlin' ;
 And the likes o' them wad say,
 " Aye, be lauchin' while ye may,
 For ye'll no can joke wi' Hornie, John Macfarlane ! "

When he let his hammer lie
 And the Barley Stook was dry
 (For they pit their shutters up when Johnnie flittit),
 When the Guid Fowk an' the Wise
 Heard him chap at Paradise,
 Then I'm no sae sure he didna get admittit !
 And I think they let him ben,
 For they'd say " Wi' mortal men
 We hae mind ye were their billie and their darlin'—
 Dinna keep yer bonnet on
 And pit doon the sneckie,* John,
 For ye're just a bit exception, John Macfarlane ! "

* latch

THE WATER-HEN

As I gaed doon by the twa mill dams i' the mornin'
The water-hen cam' oot like a passin' wraith,
And her voice ran through the reeds wi' a sound of
warnin',

“Faith—keep faith!”

“Aye, bird, tho' ye see but ane ye may cry on baith!”

As I gaed doon the field when the dew was lyin',
My ain love stood whaur the road an' the mill-lade met,
And it seemed to me that the rowin' wheel was cryin',

“Forgie—forget,

And turn, man, turn, for ye ken that ye lo'e her yet!”

As I gaed doon the road 'twas a weary meetin',
For the ill words said yestreen they were aye the same,
And my het * he'rt drowned the wheel wi' its heavy beatin'.

“Lass, think shame,

It's no for me to speak, for it's you to blame!”

As I gaed doon by the toon when the day was springin'
The Baltic brigs lay thick by the soundin' quay
And the riggin' hummed wi' the sang that the wind was
singin',

“Free—gang free,

For there's mony a load on shore may be skailed † at sea!”

When I cam hame wi' the thrang o' the years ahint me
There was naucht to see for the weeds and the lade in
spate,

But the water-hen by the dams she seemed aye to mind
me,

Cryin' “Hope—wait!”

“Aye, bird, but my een grow dim, an' it's late—late!”

* hot

† scattered, or dropped

THE WARLD

The warld's aboot the queerest place—
Ye couldna just say foo tae tak it—
And queer the fowk o' human race
Mak it.

Ye'll hae a plack * for them that beg,
Ye'll lift a lame dog owre the stiles,
He'll roond an' hae ye by the leg
Whiles.

Ye'll dae yer best—ye can nae mair—
Ill-gittit † fowk will hae ye huntit
And niver lowse ‡ until ye're fair
Affrontit.

And whiles I've thocht “ I winna wait
Tae gie them back as guid's they gie,”
But a' the same I didna dae't—
No me !

The women's tongues, baith loud an' saft,
Bring oot the thrawness o' their naturs,
But fine I see they're nocht but daft,
Puir cratur.

Lord ! I hae wished Eliza dumb,
Her ragin' was that strang and stoot ;
Yet, at her kistin', I was some
Pit oot.

The mair ye gie the less ye'll get,
The road's aye reuch, whaure'er ye strike it,
The warld's a heap o' durt—an' yet
Ye like it.

* small coin † ill-natured ‡ let go, desist

THE WHINS

I come o' verra godly fowk,
My feyther's yoke was that severe
Ye wadna feel the smell o' smoke
Intill oor hoose frae year tae year.

He wadna thole * a haverin' bairn,
And should ye daur tae speak at table
Ye'd hae yon chapter a' tae lairn
That tells ye o' the Too'r o' Babel.

At preachin', gin we turned oor een
Or cracked a sweetie wi' oor jaws,
It's weel we kent, gin we were seen,
We'd want oor meat and get the tawse.

And what a rage it gar'd him feel,
When we were men and in his hearin'
We'd cry " My certie ! " or " The deil ! "—
He'd pit us frae the hoose for swearin'.

Weel, I hae trayv'led far, and syne
I've kent a lot o' tramps an' tinks †
And men that's warkin' on the line
An' lads that's had owre mony drinks ;

I've been wi' sailors cursin' het
And near tae them that's knocked their shins,
But what I heard I'll ne'er forget
When Grannie couped ‡ amang the whins !

* endure

† tinkers

‡ fell

REJECTED

I'm fairly disjaskit,* Christina,
The warld an' its glories are toom,
I'm laid like a stane whaur ye left me
Tae greet wi' my heid i' the broom.

A' day has the lav'rock been singin'
Up yont, far awa' i' the blue,
I thocht that his sang was sae bonnie,
But it disna seem bonnie the noo !

A' day has the cushie been coortin'
His joe i' the boughs o' the ash,
But gin Love was wheep'd frae the pairish
It isna mysel' that wad fash !

For losh ! what a work I've had wi' ye !
At mairkit, at kirk or at fair
I've ne'er let anither lad near ye—
And what can a lassie need mair ?

An' oh ! but I've socht ye and watched ye ;
Whaurever yer fitsteps was set,
Gin ye pit but yer neb i' the gairden
I was aye glowrin' in at the yett !

Ye'll mind when ye sat at the windy
Dressed oot i' yer grand Sawbath black,
Richt brawly I kent that ye saw me,
But ye just slippit oot at the back !

* undone, downcast

Christina, 'twas shamefu'—aye was it !
Affrontin' a man like mysel',
It's plain that ye're daft, for what ails ye
Is past comprehension tae tell.

Guid stuff's no sae common, Christina,
There's chances ye shouldna let flee ;
Ye may tryst wi' the laird or the provost,
But ye'll no find the marrows * o' me !

* match

THE TRAMP TO THE TATTIE-DULIE

Thrawn-leggit carle wi' airms on hie
And jist a hole for ilka ee,
Ye needna lift yer hand to me
As though ye'd strike me ;
Ye're threets abune an' strae below,
But what-like use is sic a show ?
Ye maun respec' me, bogle, tho'
Ye mauna like me !

To gutsy doo or thievin' craw
Ye mebbe represent the law
When they come fleein' owre the wa'
To tak an airin'.
Dod, I'll no say they arena richt
When sic a fell, unchancy sicht
Gars them think twice afore they licht—
But *I'm* no carin' !

Yer heid's a neep,* yer wame's † a sack,
Yer ill-faured face gars bairnies shak',
But yet the likes o' you can mak
 A livin' frae it ;
Sma' use to me ! It isna fair,
For though there's mony wad declare
That I'm no far ahint ye there,
 I canna dae it !

Life's a disgust wi' a' its ways,
For free o' chairge ye get yer claes.
Nae luck hae I on washin'-days—
 There's plenty dryin',
But gin I see a usefu' sark
An' bide or gloamin' help my wark,
The guidwife's oot afore it's dark—
 And leaves nane lyin'.

Weel, weel, I'm aff. It's little pleasure
To see ye standin' at yer leisure
When I've sae mony miles to measure
 To get a meal !
Ye idle dog ! My bonnet's through,
An' yours is no exac'ly new,
But a' the same I'll hae't frae you,
 And faur-ye-weel !

* turnip

† belly

THE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Abune the hill a muckle star is burnin',
Sae saft an' still, my dear, sae far awa',
There's ne'er a wind, noo day tae nicht is turnin',
Tae lift the branches o' the whusperin' shaw.
Aye, Jess, there's nane tae see
But just the sheep an' me,
And ane's fair wastit when there micht be twa !

Alang the knowes there's no a beast that's movin',
Thae sheep o' mine lie sleepin' i' the dew ;
There's just ae thing that's wearyin' and rovin',
And that's mysel' that wearies, wantin' you.
What ails ye, that ye bide
In-by—and me ootside
Tae curse an' daunder a' the gloamin' through ?

Tae haud my tongue and aye hae patience wi' ye
Is waur nor what a lass like you can guess ;
For a' yer pranks I canna but forgie ye,
Aye-fegs ! there's nocht can gar me lo'e ye less ;
Heaven's i' yer een, and whiles
There's Heaven i' yer smiles,
But oh ! ye tak a deal o' courtin', Jess !

THE KELPIE

I'm feared o' the road ayont the glen,
I'm sweir to pass the place
Whaur the water's rinnin', for a' fowk ken
There's a kelpie sits at the fit o' the den,
And there's them that's seen his face.

But whiles he watches an' whiles he hides
And whiles, gin na wind manes,
Ye can hear him roarin' frae whaur he bides
An' the soond o' him splashin' agin' the sides
O' the rocks an' the muckle stanes.

When the mune gaes doon at the arn-tree's * back
In a wee, wee weary licht,
My bedclaes up to my lugs I tak,
For I mind the swirl o' the water black
An' the cry i' the fearsome nicht.

And lang an' fell is yon road to me
As I come frae the schule ;
I daurna think what I'm like to see
When dark fa's airly on buss an' tree
At Martinmas and Yule.

Aside the crusie † my mither reads.
“ My bairn,” says she, “ ye've heard
The Lord is mindfu' o' a' oor needs,
An' His shield an' buckler's abune the heids
O' them that keeps His word.”

But I'm a laddie that's no that douce,
An' fechtin's a bonnie game ;
The dominie's pawmies ‡ are little use,
An' mony's the Sawbath I'm rinnin' loose
When a'body thinks I'm hame !

* alder tree † iron oil-lamp ‡ canings

Dod, noo we're nearin' the shorter days
It's canny I'll hae to gang,
An' keep frae fechtin' an' sic-like ways,
And no be tearin' my Sawbath claes
Afore that the nichts grow lang.

Richt guid an' couthie I'll need to be
(But it's leecin' to say I'm glad).
I ken there's troubles that fowk maun dree,
An' the kelpie's no like to shift for me,
Sae, gin thae warlocks are fear'd o' Thee,
Lord, mak me a better lad !

DONALD MACLANE

The ling for bed and the loan for bield
And the maist o' the winter through
The wild wind sabbin' owre muir an' field,
There's lang, lang drifts on the braes I've speil'd,
O Donald Maclane, wi' you !

Fu' mony trayvels in sun and rain.
Wi' a sang for the gait they treid,
But the blythest gangers step aye their lane,
No twa thegither but ane by ane,
When gangin's their daily breid.

A dancin' ee and a daffin' tongue,
A voice i' the loanin' green—
Aye, fules think lichtly when fules are young
Tae pu' the nettle and no be stung,
An' it's nocht but a fule I've been.

A crust for meat an' a curse for cheer,
The wecht o' a heavy hand ;
A skirl o' pipes i' the mornin' clear,
The rose-hip reid wi' the fadin' year
And the breith o' the frozen land.

There was nane tae see when I set ma face
Till a road that has ne'er an end,
There's a door that's steekit and toom's the place
That minds ma ain o' a black disgrace
And an ill that they canna mend.

Ma feyther's bent wi' his broken pride
And the shame that he'll no forgie,
But the love o' mithers is deep an' wide,
And there's maybe room for a thocht tae hide
An' a prayer for the likes o' me.

Play up, play up noo, Donald Maclane,
And awa' till oor rovin' trade ;
For the wild pipes gie me a he'rt again
In a breist sae weary that whiles there's nane,
The wailin' pipes and the bairnies twain
That are happit intill ma plaid.

CAIRNEYSIDE

I turned my een tae the lift
When nicht was on the glen
As I steppit oot frae my feyther's door
Tae tryst wi' Chairlie's men ;
I thocht the stars like a gallant line
That fechts for a country's pride,
And they shone mair clear nor the lights o' hame
In the water o' Cairneyside.

There was never a star tae see
When the heather happ'd * my heid
And the wild wind grat † owre Culloden muir
For the deein' and the deid ;
My mou' was dry wi' the drouth o' hell
And I grippit the moss and cried
For the cauld, sweet taste on my burnin' lips
O' the water o' Cairneyside.

I turned my fitsteps hame
When the huntit were at rest
And the shots rang oot owre the land nae mair
On the hillsides o' the west ;
And I socht the place at my mither's hairth
Whaur a broken lad nicht hide—
There was naucht left standin' but nakit wa's
By the water o' Cairneyside.

* wrapped

† wept

MAGGIE

Maggie, I ken that ye are noo in glory
And nane can gar ye greet ;
The joys o' Heaven are ever mair afore ye,
Its licht about yer feet.

I ken nae waefae thochts can e'er be near ye,
Nor sorrow fash yer mind ;
In yon braw place they winna let ye weary
For him ye left behind.

Thae nights an' days when dule seems mair nor double,
I'll need to dae my best,
For aye ye took the half o' ilka trouble,
And noo I'd hae ye rest.

Yer he'rt'll be the same he'rt since yer flittin'
Gin auld love doesna tire,
Sae dinna look and sec yer lad that's sittin'
His lane aside the fire.

The sky is keen wi' dancin' stars in plenty
The New Year frost is strang ;
But, O my lass ! Because the auld year kent ye,
I'm sweir to let it gang !

But time drives forrit ; and on ilk December
There waits a New Year yet,
And naething bides but what our he'rts remember—
Maggie, ye'll no forget ?

“ KIRRIE ”

Comin' oot frae Kirrie, when the autumn gowd an' siller
At the hindmaist o' September-month has grips o'
tree an' shaw,
The mune hung, deaved wi' sunset, no' a spunk o' pride
intill her,
Nae better nor a bogle, till the licht was awa' ;
An' the haughs below the Grampians, i' the evenin' they
were linyin'
Like a lang-socht Land o' Promise that the cauld mist
couldna smoor ;
An' tho' ye didna see it, ye could hear the river cryin'
If ye stood a while to listen on the road to Kirriemuir.

There's an auld wife bides in Kirrie—set her up ! a
pridefu' cratur—
And she's crackin' aye o' London an' the grand fowk
ye may see ;
O' the king, an' syne his palace, till I'm sure I'm like
to hate her,
For the mairket-day in Kirrie is the sicht for me.
But ye ken I'm sweir to fash her, an' it's best to be
agreein',
For gin ye dinna heed her, then she's cankered-like
an' soor,
Dod, she tells o' muckle lairnin'—but I doot the bizzar's *
leein',
For it's fules wad bide in London when they kent o'
Kirriemuir.

O, the braw, braw toon o' Kirrie ! What a years that
I hae lo'ed it !
And I winna seek to leave it tho' I'm spared anither
score ;

* jade



I'd be greetin' like a laddie for the auld reid hooses
croodit

Lookin' down upon the steadin's and the fields o'
Strathmore.

Ye may speak o' heavenly mansions, ye may say it wadna
grieve ye

When ye quit a world sae bonnie—but I canna jist
be sure,

For I'll hae to wait, I'm thinkin', or I see if I believe ye,
For my first braid blink o' Heaven an' my last o'
Kirriemuir !

PRIDE

Did iver ye see the like o' that ?
The warld's fair fashioned to winder at !
Heuch—dinna tell me ! Yon's Fishie Pete
That cried the haddies in Ferry Street
Set up wi' his coats an' his grand cigars
In ane o' thae stinkin' motor-cars !

I mind the time (an' it's no far past)
When he wasna for fleein' alang sae fast,
An' doon i' the causey his cairt wad stand
As he roared oot " Haddies ! " below his hand ;
Ye'd up wi' yer windy an' doon he'd loup
Frae the shaft o' the cairt by the sheltie's doup.*

* croup

Aye, muckle cheenges an' little sense,
A bawbee's wit an' a poond's pretence !
For there's him noo wi' his neb to the sky
I' yon deil's machinery swiggit * by,
An' me, that whiles gied him a piece to eat,
Tramps aye to the kirk on my ain twa feet.

And neebours, mind ye, the warld's agley
Or we couldna see what we've seen the day ;
Guid fortune's blate whaur she's weel desairv't
The sinner fu' an' the godly stairv't,
An' fowk like me an' my auld guidman
Jist wearied daein' the best we can !

I've kept my lips an' my tongue frae guile
An' kept mysel' to mysel' the while ;
Agin a' wastrels I've aye been set
And I'm no for seekin' to thole them yet ;
A grand example I've been through life,
A righteous liver, a thrifty wife.

But oh ! the he'rt o' a body bleeds
For favours sclarried † on sinfu' heids.
Wait you a whilie ! Ye needna think
They'll no gang frae him wi' cairds an' drink !
They'll bring nae blessin', they winna bide,
For the warst sin, neebours, is pride, aye, pride !

* swung, whirled

† spilt

MISTRESS MACKAY

She wadna bide oot an' she wadna bide in,
The tea was infused but she wadna begin,
There were jeelies an' bannocks tae welcome her doon,
And a bottle o' whuskey they'd bocht i' the toon,
And the hale o' the neebours hurrayin' like ane
When Mistress Mackay got a flicht in a plane.

She socht the black silk she'd pit by i' the press,
The bonnet wi' jet an' wi' feathers—nae less!
Says she, "They'd think shame o' me gin I was seen
Tae be ridin' the skies in ma auld bombazine,"
And a grand umberella tae keep aff the rain
Went fleein' wi' Mistress Mackay in a plane.

Sic a crood at the causey * as niver ye saw,
She was oot at the doorstep tae bow tae them a',
"I'm pleased tae accep' yer attentions," says she,
"Noo, presairvit frae deith, I'll sit doon tae ma tea,
And the morn, gin it's fine, get a photygraph ta'en
I' the bonnet I wore on ma flicht i' the plane."

There wasna a windy that looked on the street
But had gotten her caird wi' inscription complete,
And ne'er a wee loon saw a hame-comin' crow
Grow big as it cam' whaur it aince had been sma',
But he ran, cryin' oot like the skreich o' a train,
"Here's Mistress Mackay i' the lift in a plane!"

And noo that she's got an illustrious name
And wi' Cæsar an' Nelson has moontit tae fame,
Ye'll read i' the papers, "See Mistress Mackay
On 'Balkan Finance' or 'Will Scotland gang dry?'
'Should Widowers smoke?' or 'Is Shakespeare pro-
fane?'"

She can answer them a' since her flicht i' the plane!

* street

Speir you at the neebours. There's nocht they can dac
But Mistress Mackay has got somethin' tae say ;
Nae coortin' a lassie, nae dance on the green,
Nae buyin' a coo nor baptizin' a wean,
For the verra last hour that their sauls were thair ain
Was when Mistress Mackay steppit doon frae the
plane !

ROHALLION

Ma buits are at rest on the midden,
I haena a plack ;
Ma breeks are no dandy anes, forrit,
And waur at the back ;
On the road that comes oot o' the Hielands
I see as I trayvel the airth
Frae the braes at the back o' Rohallion
The reek abune Pairth.

There's a canny wee hoose wi' a gairden
In a neuk o' Strathtay ;
Ma mither is bakin' the bannocks,
The weans are at play ;
And at gloamin' ma feyther, the shepherd,
Looks doon for a blink o' the licht
When he gets the yowes at the shieling
Tae fauld them at nicht.

There isna a hoose that could haud me
Frae here tae the sea
When a wind frae the braes o' Rohallion
Comes creepin' tae me ;
And niver a lowe frae the ingle
Can draw like the trail an' the shine
O' the stars i' the loch o' Rohallion
A fitstep o' mine.

There's snaw i' the wind, an' the weepies
Hang deid on the shaw,
An' pale the leaves left on the rowan,
I'm soothward awa' ;
But a voice like a wraith blaws ahint me
And sings as I'm liftin' ma pack,
" I am waitin'—Rohallion, Rohallion—
Ma lad, ye'll be back ! "

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE DITCH

Aweel, I'm couped. But wha' could tell
The road wad rin sae sair ?
I couldna gang yon pace mysel' ;
An' I winna try nae mair !

There's them wad coonsel me to stan',
But this is what I say :
When nature's forces fecht wi' man
Dod, he maun just gie way !

If man's nae framed to lift his fit
Agin a nat'ral law,
I winna' lift my heid, for it
Wad dae nae guid ava.

Puir worms are we—the poo'pit rings
Ilk Sawbath wi' the same.
Gin airth's the place for sic-like things,
I'm no sae far frae hame !

Yon's guid plain reas'nin' ; an' forbye,
This pairish has nae sense,
There's mony trayv'lin' wad deny
Nature and Providence ;

For loud an' bauld the leears wage
On men like me their war,
Elected saints to thole their rage
Is what they're seekin' for.

But tho' a man wha's drink's his tea
Their malice maun despise,
It's no for naething, div ye see,
That I'm sae sweir to rise !

THE POOR SUITOR

When spring comes loupin' doon the braes
And nakit trees are gettin' claes,
The sun—ill-gettit * deevil—seeks
Tae shame the patches in my breeks.

The birds gang courtin', brawly drest
By natur in their verra best,
But my auld coat can no be seen
Affrontin' Isabella's een.

And when the Sawbath day is near
Tae tak her oot I daurna speir,
Lest soor auld wives should say she had
A tattie-dulie for a lad !

My mither tells me no tae fash,
That worth is a', appearance trash ;
Weel, worth may mak a decent fella—
It winna gie me Isabella !

Oh, for a dandy suit o' blue
And buits that let nae water through !
Oh, that frae ony airt nicht fa'
A when bawbees tae mak me braw !

As round the year the seasons creep
I mind the swine, I drive the sheep ;
E'en tho' my luck a turn nicht tak,
'Twad come owre late tae pay me back.

'Twad find the same auld sheep an' swine,
And Isabella wed lang syne,
And me like Daddy Black that begs,
Thrawn † i' the he'rt and i' the legs !

* ill-natured

† twisted

THE TINKLER'S BALOO *

Haud yer whisht, my mannie,
Hide yer heid the noo,
There's a jimp † young mune i' the branches abune
An' she's keekin' at me an' you.
Near she is to settin',
Waukin' she shouldna be,
An' mebbe she sees i' the loan by the trees
Owre muckle for you an' me.

Dinna cry on Daddie,
Daddie's by the fairm,
There's a specklie hen that strays i' the den
An' he's fear'd she may come to hairm.
Thieves is bauld an' mony,
That's what guid fowk say,
An' they'd a' complain gin the limmer was ta'en
An' cheughit ‡ afore its day.

Sleep, an' then, come Sawbath,
A feather o' gray ye'll get
Wi' specklies on it to set i' yer bonnet
An' gar ye look brawer yet.
Sae hide yer heid, my mannie,
Haud yer whisht, my doo,
For we'll hae to shift or the sun's i' the lift
An' I'm singin' baloo, baloo !

* cradle-song

† slender

‡ choked

THE BOLD WOOER

O Eppie, when wi' you I meet
Ye're that set-up I'd like tae greet,
The gollach * cra'lin at yer feet
Gets mair respec' nor me O !
Up gangs yer neb ; awa' ye sail
As though the pest was on the gale,
Or a' the coorse were bilin' kale
Tae gar the denty † flee O !

Guid workin' wives frae near and far,
They ken the madam that ye are,
And " Maircy, laddie, dinna daur "
Is what they cry tae me O !
" Yon besom's worth, on mairket days,
Fu' three poond ten frae heid tae taes,
And sic a waste i' Sawbath claes
We canna thole tae see O !

But Eppie, tho' it's gospel true,
Thair clash has tell't me naethin' new,
And flegg'd by them or yet by you
I dinna mean tae be O !
And tho' I ken yer cantrips weel—
A pettit wretch and owre genteel—
I'll up and tell ye what I feel,
And hae ye yet, maybe O !

* beetle

† dainty

THE BLIND SHEPHERD

The land is white, an' far awa'
Abune ilk buss an' tree
Nae fit is movin' i' the snaw
On the hills I canna see ;
For the sun may shine an' the darkness fa',
But aye it's nicht to me.

I hear the whaup * on windy days
Cry up amang the peat
Whaur, on the road that speels the braes,
I've heard my ain sheep's feet,
An' the bonnie lambs wi' their canny ways
An' the silly yowes that bleat.

But noo wi' them I mauna be,
An' by the fire I bide,
To sit and listen patiently
For a fit on the great hillside,
A fit that'll come to the door for me
Doon through the pasture wide.

Maybe I'll hear the baa'in' flocks
Ae nicht when time seems lang,
An' ken there's a step on the scattered rocks
The fleggit sheep amang,
An' a voice that cries an' a hand that knocks
To bid me rise an' gang.

* curlew

Then to the hills I'll lift my een
 Nae matter tho' they're blind,
For Ane will treid the stanes between
 And I will walk behind,
Till up, far up i' the midnight keen
 The licht o' Heaven I'll find.

An' maybe, when I'm up the hill
 An' stand abune the steep,
I'll turn aince mair and look my fill
 On my ain auld flock o' sheep,
An' I'll leave them lyin' sae white an' still
 On the quiet braes asleep.

THE LAST ANE

I gaed me doon the heid o' the wynd,
Oot-by, below the stair,
But there was nane o' the fowk I'd kent
Tae crack wi', there.

I set my face tae the bield o' the dock
Whaur the brigs wad wait the tide ;
There was niver a man that had sailed wi' me
At the waterside.

I took the road to the toon-hoose wa'
An' the seat whaur the auld men sit ;
The broun leaves skailed frae the kirkyaird trees
Across ma fit.

I turned me doon the path by the kirk
Wi' the stanes set close at hand,
Whaur the freends that liena their fill at sea
Are laid on land.

The yett was wide but the kirkyaird bars
Had gotten their toonsfowk fast,
And the auld stanes there for the man tae see
That's left the last.

There was Ane in yonder. Oh, straicht an' fine
He stude by the coupet * thrang,
And my sair he'rt loup'd as He looked on me,
For I'd kent him lang !

* fallen or overthrown

THE DAFT BIRD

When day is past an' peace comes doon wi' gloamin'
An' twa by twa the young fowk pass the yett,
Auld stocks like me maun let their thochts content them,
Mindin' o' coortin's that they'll no forget.
Ye're no sae far awa' the nicht, my Marget,
Tho' on the brae-heid, past the dyke, ye lie,
Whaur ae daft bird is singin' i' the kirkyaird
And ae star watches i' the evenin' sky.

Late bird, daft bird, the likes o' you are bedded,
The daylight's deid, it's hame that ye should be,
Yer voice is naucht to them that winna hear ye ;
But sing you on, it isna naucht to me.
Dod, like yersel', it's time that I was sleepin',
Sae lang it is since Marget laid her doon,
And ilka year treids up ahint anither
Like evenin's ghaist ahint the aifternoon.

For rest comes slaw to you an' me, I'm thinkin',
Oor day's wark's surely lang o' wearin' through,
The gloamin's had been wearier an' langer,
Thae nichts o' June, late warker, wantin' you.
I maun hae patience yet, I'll no be grievin',
There's them that disna fail tho' day be spent,
An' yon daft bird's aye singing i' the kirkyaird—
Lord, I will bide my time, an' bide content.

THE BALTIC

“ Whaur are ye gaen sae fast, my bairn,
It's no tae the schule ye'll win ? ”

“ *Doon tae the shore at the fit o' the toon
Tae bide till the brigs come in.* ”

“ Awa' noo wi' ye and turn ye hame,
Ye'll no hae the time tae bide ;
It's twa lang months or the brigs come back
On the lift o' a risin' tide.”

“ *I'll sit me doon at the water's mou'
Till there's niver a blink * o' licht,
For my feyther bad' me tae tryst wi' him
In the dairkness o' yesternicht.* ”

“ ‘ Rise ye an' rin tae the shore,’ says he,
‘ At the cheep o' the waukin' bird,
And I'll bring ye a tale o' a foreign land
The like that ye niver heard.’ ”

“ Oh, haud yer havers, ye feckless wean,
It was but a dream ye saw,
For he's far, far north wi' the Baltic men
I' the hurl o' the Baltic snaw ;

And what did he ca' yon foreign land ? ”

“ *He tell'tna its name tae me,
But I doot it's no by the Baltic shore,
For he said there was nae mair sea.* ”

* beam

THE ROWAN

When the days were still as deith
And ye couldna see the kye,
Though ye'd maybe hear their breith
 I' the mist oot-by ;
When I'd mind the lang grey een
O' the warlock by the hill
And sit fleggit like a wean
Gin a whaup cried shrill ;
Tho' the he'rt wad dee in me
At a fitstep on the floor,
There was aye the rowan tree
Wi' its airm across the door.

But that is far, far past
And a'things just the same ;
There's a whisper up the blast
O' a dreid I daurna name ;
And the shilpit * sun is thin
Like an auld man deein' slow,
And a shade comes creepin' in
When the fire is fa'in low ;
Then I feel the lang een set
Like a doom upon my heid,
For the warlock's livin' yet—
 But the rowan's deid !

* feeble

THE JAUD *

“ O what are ye seein', ye auld wife,
I' the bield o' the kirkyaird wa' ? ”

*“ I see a place whaur the grass is lang
Wi' the great black nettles grawn fierce an' strang
And a stane that is clour'd in twa.”*

“ What way div ye glower, ye auld wife,
Sae lang on the whumml'd† stane ?
Ye hae nae kin that are sleepin' there,
Yer three braw dochters are guid an' fair
An ilk wi' a man o' her ain !

“ There's dule an' tears i' yer auld een
Tho' little eneuch ye lack ;
Yer man is kindly, as weel ye ken,
Yer fower bauld laddies are thrivin' men
And ilk wi' a fairm at his back.

“ Turn, turn yer face frae yon cauld lair
And back tae yer plenish'd hame ;
It's a jaud lies yont i' the nettle shaws
Whaur niver a blink o' the sunlicht fa's
On the mools that hae smoor'd her name.”

*“ Her hair was gowd like the gowd broom,
Her een like the stars abune,
Sae prood an' lightsome an' fine was she
Wi' her breist like the flowers o' the white rose tree
When they're lyin' below the mune.”*

* jade

† overturned

“ Haud you yer havers, ye auld wife,
Think shame o’ the words ye speak,
Tho’ men lay fast in her beauty’s grip
She brocht the fleer tae the wumman’s lip
An’ the reid tae the lassie’s cheek. .

“ Ye’ve lived in honour, ye auld wife,
But happit in shame she lies,
And them that kent her will turn awa’
When the Last Day braks tae the trumpet’s ca’
And the sauls o’ the righteous rise.”

“ *Maybe. But lave me tae bide my lane
At the fit o’ the freendless queyn ;
For oh ! wi’ envy I’m like tae dee
O’ the world she had that was no for me
And the kingdom that ne’er was mine !*”

ADAM

Ye're richt weel buskit,* yer poke is fu',
Ye ride i' yer ain machine ;
'Twould tak a fule to hae words wi' you
An' no ken the gowk he's been.

At rowp † or preachin' the best ye'll hae,
This warld or the neist ane's gear,
The breist ‡ o' the laft on a Sawbath day,
Or a seat by the auctioneer.

Ye're no jist auld an' ye arena young,
But it doesna affec' the case,
For I'm aye that fear'd o' a wumman's tongue
That I'm like to forget her face.

An' fowk says " Donal', ye're forty past,
I doot she'll be fifty-three,
But ye maun settle yersel' at last
That hasna a spare bawbee.

" Oh, youth's a ploy, but it winna bide,
And a body's gettin' on—
What ails ye, man, at a thrifty bride
Wi' a dandy bit hoose like yon ? "

Them's wise-like bodies I hae to thank,
And mebbe they're no far wrang ;
But whiles ye'll step frae a creakin' plank
An' doon i' the glaur § ye'll gang !

* dressed † sale ‡ the front seat in the gallery
§ mud

It's warm, thae nichts, i' the auld King's Heid ;
What better can ye desire
Than a lass to bring ye the dram ye need
An' yer billies around the fire ?

An' wha is't redes me to tak a wife ?
A puckle o' single men !
No ane, I'm thinkin', wad risk his life
Wi' a jaud that he disna ken !

I'll wish ye luck an' a braw guidman,
And weel may ye baith agree,
But I'm no seekin' ye, Maggie-Ann,
And I doot that he'll no be me !

JEEMSIE MILLER

There's some that mak themsels a name
Wi' preachin', business, or a game,
There's some wi' drink hae gotten fame,
 And some wi' siller :
I kent a man got glory cheap,
For nane frae him their een could keep,
Losh ! he was shapit like a neep,
 Was Jeemsie Miller !

When he gaed drivin' doon the street
Wi' cairt an' sheltie, a' complete,
The plankie whaur he had his seat
 Was bent near double ;
And gin yon wood had na been strang
It hadna held oor Jeemsie lang,
He had been landit wi' a bang,
 And there'd been trouble.

Ye could but mind, to see his face,
The reid mune glowerin' on the place,
Nae man had e'er sae muckle space
 To haud his bonnet :
And owre yon bonnet on his brow,
Set cockit up owre Jeemsie's pow,
There waggit, reid as lichtit tow,
 The toorie * on it.

And Jeemsie's poke was brawly lined,
There wasna mony couldna' find
His cantie hoosie i' the wynd,
 " The Salutation " :
For there ye'd get, wi' sang and clink,
What some ca'd comfort, wi' a wink,
And some that didna care for drink
 Wad ca' damnation !

* topknot

But dinna think, altho' he made
Sae grand a profit o' his trade,
An' muckle i' the bank had laid,
He wadna spare o't,
For, happit whaur it wasna seen,
He'd aye a dram in his machine,
An' never did he meet a freen'
But got a share o't.

Ae day he let the sheltie fa'
(Whisht, sirs ! he wasna fou—na, na !
A wee thing pleasant, that was a',
An' drivin' canny).
Fegs ! he cam' hurlin' owre the front
An' struck the road wi' sic a dunt,
Ye'd thocht the causey got the brunt
And no the mannie !

Aweel, it was his hin'most drive ;
Aifter yon clour he couldna thrive,
For, twa pairts deid an' ane alive,
His billies foond him :
And, bedded then, puir Jeemsie lay,
And a' the nicht and a' the day
Relations cam to greet an' pray
An' gaiter roond him.

Said Jeemsie, " Cousins, gie's a pen,
Awa' an' bring the writer ben ;
What I hae spent wi' sinfu' men
I weel regret it.
In deith I'm sweir to be disgrac't.
I've plenty left forbye my waste,
And them that I've negleckit maist
It's them'll get it."

It was a sicht to see them rin
To save him frae the grips o' sin ;
Fu' sune they got the writer in,
 His mind to settle.
And oh, their loss ! sae sair they felt it,
To a' the toon wi' tears they tell't it ;
Their dule for Jeemsie wad hae meltit
 A he'rt o' metal !

Puir Jeemsie dee'd. In a' their brows
The faim'ly cam' as black as craws,
Men, wives, an' weans wi' their mamas
 That scarce could toddle !
They grat—an' they had cause to greet ;
The wull was read that gar'd them meet—
The U.P. Kirk, just up the street,
 Got ilka bodle !

THE TATTIE-LIFTIN' !

Ye twa lang-leggit horsemen
That plough the fields wi' me,
It's Bell that's gotten baith yer he'rts
And noo she's ta'en the three ;
For there's nane fit tae speak o' her
Nor yet a glance tae seek o' her,
Nor touch the bonnie cheek o' her,
Sae jimp and sweet is she !

But Bell gangs tattie-liftin'
Wi' the lasses ilka day,
An' bides awa' till evenin' brings
The mune across the brae.
An' oh, gin I could gang wi' her
Thae tattie-shaws amang wi' her
And syne gang hame along wi' her
The hale lang dairk'nin' way !

And I'm that fear'd tae ask her
That I hae'na got the pow'r,
There's whiles I think she lo'es me,
An' I see ye curse an' glow'r.
But I'll no heed the stare o' ye,
An' sune we'll hear nae mair o' ye,
For I'm tae sort * the pair o' ye
When tattie-liftin's owre !

* deal drastically with

A WIDOW

Her feet intill her easy shune,
Ye'll see her ony aifternoon
Aside her door along the toon.

Sae tidy-clad frae heid tae heel,
Her hair drawn backward, richt genteel
Intill a net they ca' "sheneel."

She's no a talker ; passin' by,
The neebours get but sma' reply—
Just maybe "na" or maybe "aye."

She'll stand for oors and niver sits,
Wi' naethin' movin' but her wits
An' needles bobbin' as she knits.

An' gin her windy opened wide
And ye could tak a look inside
At a' the things the curtains hide,

Ye'd see, hung up intill a frame,
Sails set, complete, an' wi' her name,
A barque, square-riggitt, boond for hame ;

Grand-pentit * by some queer Chinese,
Her canvas roarin' i' the breeze,
She's racin' frae the China seas.

* painted

And when the auld wife's day is past
She gangs tae mak her shutters fast,
Watchin' the dairk creep doon at last.

And gin some pale licht lingers yet
She'll see ayont the hooses set
Yon lang blue line she'd fain forget ;

But, when she turns tae her repose
She seeks, wi' een about tae close,
The Jessie-Mary, of Montrose.

BALTIC STREET

My dainty lass, lay you the blame
Upon the richtfu' heid ;
'Twas daft ill-luck that bigg'd yer hame
The wrang side o' the Tweed.
Ye hae yer tocher * a' complete,
Ye're bonnie as the rose,
But I was born in Baltic Street,
In Baltic Street, Montrose !

Lang syne on mōny a waefu' nicht,
Hie owre the sea's distress,
I've seen the great airms o' the licht
Swing oot frae Scurdyness ;
An' prood, in sunny simmer blinks,
When land-winds rase an' fell,
I'd flee my draigon † on the links
Wi' callants like mysel'.

Oh, Baltic Street is cauld an' bare
An' mebbe no sae grand,
But ye'll feel the smell i' the caller air
O' kippers on the land.
'Twixt kirk an' street the deid fowk bide,
Their feet towards the sea,
Ill neebours for a new-made bride,
Gin ye come hame wi' me.

The steeple shades the kirkyaird grass,
The seamen's hidden banes,
A dour-like kirk to an English lass
Wha kens but English lanes ;
And when the haar, the winter through,
Creeps blind on close and wa',
My hame nicht get a curse frae you,
Myself get mebbe twa.

* dowry

† fly my kite

I'll up an' aff the morn's morn
To seek some reid-haired queyn,*
Bauld-he'rted, strang-nieved,† bred an' born
In this auld toon o' mine.
And oh ! for mair I winna greet,
Gin we hae meal an' brose
And a but an' ben in Baltic Street,
In Baltic Street, Montrose !

* lass

† strong-fisted

FAUR-YE-WEEL

As ye come through the Sea-Gate ye'll find a hoose we
ken,
Whaur, when a man is drouthy, his drouth an' he gang
ben,
And whiles o' nichts there's dancin' and aye there's
drink by day
And a fiddler-carle sits yonder an' gars his fiddle play :

“ Oh come, ye ancient mariners,
Nae maitter soond or lame,
For tho' ye gae on hirplin' * tae
Ye'll syne gang dancin' hame ;
The years are slippin' past ye
Like water past the bows,

*Roond half the warld ye've toss'd yer dram, but sune ye'll hae
to lowse.” †*

The toon is like a picture, the sea is bonnie blue,
The fiddle's cryin' aff the shore to captain, mate, an'
crew,
An' them that's had for music the swirl o' gannets'
wings,
The winds that drive frae Denmark, they dootna what
it sings :

“ Oh come, ye dandy Baltic lads
That sail to Elsinore,
Ye're newly in, ye'll surely win
To hae a spree ashore ;
Lairn frae the sea, yer maister,
When fortune's i' ye're debt,

The cauld waves washin' past the bar tak a' that they can get ! ”

* limping

† to give up, to leave off

And when the quays are lichtit an' dark the ocean lies,
The daft mune, like a feckless fule, keeks doon to mock
the wise ;

Awa' in quiet closes the fiddle's voice is heard
Whaur some that should be sleepin' are listenin' for its
word :

“ Sae haste ye noo, ye rovin' queyns,

An' gie yer dads the slip,

Tho' dour auld men sit girnin' ben

There's young anes aff the ship.

Come, tak' yer fill o' dancin',

Yer he'rts at hame maun bide,

For the lad that taks a he'rt to sea will drap it owre the side ! ”

And aye the fiddle's playin', the auld bow wauks the
string,

The auld carle, stampin' wi' his fit, gies aye the tune a
swing ;

Gang east, gang west, ye'll hear it, it lifts ye like
a reel :

*It's never dumb, an' the tune sings “ come,” but its name is
faur-ye-weel !*

ON A FLESHER *

OVERTURNED IN A DITCH DURING A FROST

Come, lads in kilts and lads in trews,
Come ben an' hear the weary news ;
I doot oor denners we're tae lose,
The bacon and the flitch ;
For life's nae mair a pleasure O !
We've lost oor dearest treasure O !
For man ! they've couped the flesher O !
The flesher's i' the ditch !

Noo faur ye weel, ye pork an' beef,
Ye've vanished like the autumn leaf,
And a' oor feastin's come tae grief,
We've got tae sic a pitch.
Oor teeth'll get their leisure O !
For whaur ye'll find the flesher O !
There's little meat tae measure O !
The flesher's i' the ditch !

Nae mair oor denty bits we'll wale, †
We'll hae tae mak oor broth o' kale,
And tho' tae save it canna fail
It winna mak us rich ;
We'll hae tae want the flesher O !
Until the weather's fresher O ! ‡
Yon frozen lamb the flesher O !
That's couped i' the ditch !

* butcher

† choose

‡ until the thaw

HOGMANAY

Oh, it's fine when the New and the Auld Year meet,
An' the lads gang roarin' i' the lichtit street,
An' there's me and there's Alick an' the miller's loon,
An' Geordie that's the piper oot o' Forfar toon.

Geordie Faa ! Geordie Faa !

Up wi' the chanter, lad, an' gie's a blaw !
For we'll step to the tune while we've feet intill oor
shune,
Tho' the bailies an' the provost be to sort us a' !

We've three bonnie bottles, but the third ane's toom,
Gin the road ran whisky, it's mysel' wad soom ! *
But we'll stan' while we can, an' be dancin' while we may,
For there's twa we hae to finish, an' it's Hogmanay.

Geordie Faa ! Geordie Faa !

There's an auld carle glow'rin' oot ahint yon wa',
But we'll sune gar him loup to the pipin' till he coup,
For we'll gie him just a drappie, an' he'll no say na !

My heid's dementit an' my feet's the same,
When they'll no wark thegither it's a lang road hame ;
An' we've twa mile to trayvel, or it's mair like three,
But I've got a grip o' Alick, an' ye'd best grip me.

Geordie Faa ! Geordie Faa !

The morn's near brakin' an' we'll need awa',
Gin ye're aye blawin' strang, then we'll mebbe get along,
An' the deevil tak' the laddie that's the first to fa' !

* swim

THE WILD GEESE

“Oh, tell me what was on yer road, ye roarin’ norlan’ wind
As ye cam’ blawin’ frae the land that’s niver frae my
mind ?

My feet they trayvel England, but I’m deein’ for the
north—”

“ *My man, I heard the siller tides rin up the Firth o’ Forth.*”

“Aye, Wind, I ken them well eneuch, and fine they fa’
and rise,

And fain I’d feel the creepin’ mist on yonder shore that
lies,

But tell me, ere ye passed them by, what saw ye on the
way ?”

“ *My man, I rocked the rovin’ gulls that sail abune the Tay.*”

“But saw ye naethin’, leein’ Wind, afore ye cam to Fife ?
There’s muckle lyin’ yont the Tay that’s mair to me nor
life.”

“ *My man, I swept the Angus braes ye haena trod for years—*”

“O Wind, forgie a hameless loon that canna see for
tears !—”

“ *And far abune the Angus straths I saw the wild geese flee,
A lang, lang skein o’ beatin’ wings wi’ their heids towards the
sea,*

And aye their cryin’ voices trailed ahint them on the air—”

“O Wind, hae maircy, haud yer whisht, for I daurna
listen mair !”

1914 - 18

JOCK, TO THE FIRST ARMY

O Rab an' Dave an' rantin' Jim,
The geans were turnin' reid
When Scotland saw yer line grow dim,
Wi' the pipers at its heid ;
Noo, i' yon warld we dinna ken,
Like strangers ye maun gang—
“ *We've sic a wale * o' Angus men
That we canna weary lang.*”

And little Wat—my brither Wat,
Man, are ye aye the same ?
Or is yon sma' white hoose forgot
Doon by the strath at hame ?
An' div ye mind foo aft we trod
The Isla's banks before ?—
“ *My place is wi' the Hosts o' God,
But I mind me o' Strathmore.*”

It's deith comes skirlin' through the sky,
Below there's nocht but pain,
We canna see whaur deid men lie
For the drivin' o' the rain ;
Ye a' hae passed frae fear an' doot,
Ye're far frae airthly ill—
“ *We're near, we're here, my wee recruit,
And we fecht for Scotland still.*”

* choice

THE FIELD BY THE LIRK O' THE HILL

Daytime and nicht,
Sun, wind an' rain
The lang cauld licht
O' the spring months again ;
The yaird's a' weed
And the fairm's a' still—
Wha'll sow the seed
I' the field by the lirk * o' the hill ?

Prood maun ye lie,
Prood did ye gang,
Auld, auld am I
And oh ! life's lang !
Ghaists i' the air,
Whaups' voices shrill,
And you nae mair
I' the field by the lirk o' the hill—
Aye, bairn, nae mair, nae mair,
I' the field by the lirk o' the hill.

* fold

GLORY

I canna see ye, lad, I canna see ye
For a' yon glory that's about yer heid,
Yon licht that haps ye and the hosts that's wi ye—
Aye, but ye live, and it's mysel' that's deid.

They gaed frae mill an' mairt ; frae wind-blown places
And grey toon-closes ; i' the empty street
Nae mair the bairns ken their steps, their faces,
Nor stand tae listen to the trampin' feet.

Beside the brae, and soughin' through the rashes,
Yer voice comes back tae me at ilka turn,
Amang the whins and whaur the water washes
The arn tree wi' its fit amangst the burn.

Whiles ye come back tae me when day is fleecin'
And a' the road oot-by is dim wi' nicht,
But weary een like mine is no for seein',
And, gin they saw, they wad be blind wi' licht.

Deith canna kill. The mools o' France lie o'er ye,
And yet ye live, O sodger o' the Lord.
For Him that focht wi' deith an' dule before ye
He gied the life—'twas Him that gied the sword.

But gin ye see my face or gin ye hear me,
I daurna ask, I mauna seek tae ken ;
Tho' I should dee wi' sic a glory near me
By nicht or day, come ben, my bairn, come ben !

HALLOWE'EN

The tattie-liftin's nearly through,
They're ploughin' whaur the barley grew,
And aifter dark, roond ilka stack,
Ye'll see the horsemen stand an' crack.
O Lachlan, but I mind o' you !

I mind foo often we hae seen
Ten thousand stars keek doon atween
The nakit branches, an' below
Baith fairm an' bothie hae their show,
Alowe wi' lichts o' Hallowe'en.

There's bairns wi' guizards * at their tail
Clourin' the doors wi' runts † o' kail,
And fine ye'll hear the skreichs an' skirls
O' lassies wi' their droukit ‡ curls
Bobbin' for aipples i' the pail.

The bothie fire is loupin' het,
A new heid horseman's kist is set
Richts o' the lum ; whaur by the blaze
The auld ane stude that kept yer claes—
I canna thole to see it yet !

But gin the auld fowks' tales are richt
An' ghaists come hame on Hallow night,
O freend o' freends, what wad I gie
To feel ye rax yer hand to me
Atween the dark an' can'le-licht ?

* mummers who go from door to door

† cabbage-stalks

‡ drenched

Awa' in France, across the wave,
The wee lights burn on ilka grave,
An' you an' me their lowe hae seen—
Ye'll mebbe hae yer Hallowe'en
Yont, whaur ye're lyin' wi' the lave.*

There's drink an' daffin', sang an' dance,
And ploys and kisses get their chance,
But Lachlan, man, the place I see
Is whaur the auld kist used to be
And the lights o' Hallowe'en in France !

* the rest

THE BRIG

I whiles gang tae the brig-side
That's past the brier tree
Along the road when the licht is wide
O'er Angus and the sea.

In by the dyke yon brier grows
Wi' leaf an' thorn its lane
And the spunk o' flame o' the brier rose
Burns saft agin' the stane.

And whiles a step treids on by me,
I mauna hear its fa',
But atween the brig an' the brier tree
There gangs na' ane, but twa.

Oot o'er yon sea, through war and strife
Ye tak yer road nae mair,
For ye've crossed the brig to the fields o' life
And ye walk for ever there.

I trayvel to the brig-side
Whaur ilka road maun cease,
My weary war may be lang tae bide
And you hae won tae peace.

There's ne'er a nicht but turns tae day,
Nor a load that's niver cast ;
And there's nae wind cries on the winter brae
But it spends itsel' at last.

O you that niver failed me yet,
Gin aince my step ye hear,
Come to yon brig atween us set
And bide till I win near !

Oh weel, aye weel ye'll ken my treid,
Ye'll seek nae word nor sign,
An' I'll no can fail at yon Brig o' Dreid
For yer hand will be in mine.

THE ROAD TO MARYKIRK

To Marykirk ye'll set ye forth
And whistle as ye step alang,
And aye the Grampians i' the north
Are glow'rin' on ye as ye gang.
By Martin's Den, through beech and birk
A breith comes soughin' sweet and strang
Alang the road tae Marykirk.

Frae mony a field ye'll hear the cry
O' teuchats, skirlin' on the wing,
Noo east, noo west, amang the kye
And smell o' 'whins the wind'll bring ;
Aye, lad, it blaws a thocht to mock
The licht o' day on ilka thing—
For you, that went yon road last spring,
Are lyin' deid in Flanders, Jock.

MONTROSE

Gin I should fa',
Lord, by ony chance,
And thae howms * o' France
Haud me for guid an' a' ;
And gin I gang tae Thee,
Lord, dinna blame,
But oh ! tak tent, tak tent o' an Angus lad like me,
An' let me hame !

I winna seek tae bide
Awa' owre lang,
Gin but Ye'll let me gang
Back tae yon rowin' tide
Whaur aye Montrose—my ain—
Sits like a queen,
The Esk ae side, ae side the sea whaur she's set her lane
On the bents between.

I'll hear the bar
Loupin' in its place,
An' see the steeple's face
Dim i' the creepin haar ;
And the toon clock's sang
Will cry through the weit,
And the coal-bells ring, aye ring, on the cairts as they gang
I' the droukit street.

Heaven's hosts are glad,
Heaven's hames are bricht,
And in yon streets o' licht
Walks mony an Angus lad ;
But my he'rt's aye back
Whaur my ain toon stands
And the steeple's shade is laid when the tide's at the slack
On the lang sands.

* holms

KIRSTY'S OPINION

Fine div I ken what ails yon puddock,* Janet,
That used tae hae her neb set up sae hie ;
There's them that disna seem tae understan' it,
I'se warrant ye, it's plain eneuch tae me !

Mebbe ye'll mind her man, a fine wee cratur,
Owre blate † tae speak—puir thing, he didna daur ;
What gar'd him fecht was just his douce-like natur ;
Gairmins is bad, but Janet's tongue was waur !

But noo he's hame again ye wadna ken her,
He isna fear'd tae contradic' her flat,
He smokes a' day, comes late tae get his denner
(I mind the time she'd sort him weel for that !)

What's gar'd her turn an' tak a road divairgint ?
Think ye she's wae because he's lost a limb ?
Ach ! haud yer tongue, ye fule—the man's a sairgint,
And there's nae argy-bargyin' wi' him !

* toad

† shy

THE TWA WEELUMS

I'm Sairgent Weelum Henderson frae Perth,
That's wha I am !
There's just ae bluidy regiment on airth
That's worth a damn ;
And gin the bonniest fechter o' the lot
Ye seek tae see,
Him that's the best—*whaur ilka man's a Scot*
Speir you at me !

Gin there's a hash o' Gairmans pitten oot
By aichts an' tens,
That Wully Henderson's been there about
A'body kens.
Fegs-aye ! yon Weelum that's in Gairmanic
He hadna reckoned
Wi' Sairgent Weelum Henderson and wi'
The Forty-Second !

Yon day we lichtit on the shores o' France
The lassies standin'
Trode ilk on ither's taes tae get the chance
Tae see us landin' ;
The besoms ! Oh, they smiled tae me—an' yet
They couldna help it ;
(Mysel', I just was thinkin' foo we'd get
Thae Gairmins skelpit.)

I'm wearied wi' them, for it's aye the same
Whaure'er we gang.
Oor captain thinks we've got his een tae blame,
But man ! he's wrang ;
I winna say he's no as smairt a lad
As ye might see
Atween twa Sawbaths—aye, he's no sae bad,
But he's no me !

Weel, let the limmers bide ; their bonnie lips
Are fine an' reid,
But me and Weelum's got tae get tae grips
Afore we're deid :
And gin he thinks he hasna met his match,
He'll sune be wiser.
Here's tae mysel' ! Here's tae the Auld Black Watch,
An' damn the Kaiser !

