

Cairntable Rhymes

BY

THOMAS FLOYD

MUIRKIRK

(1858 - 1933)

COMPLETE EDITION

COMPILED BY JAMES TAYLOR

1998

AN INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to reproduce the full works of the Muirkirk poet, Thomas Floyd. The first edition (a shorter version of the present one) was printed by "The Muirkirk Advertiser" in 1929, and then, following his death in 1933, the Posthumous Edition was produced in 1934. So much of the history of Muirkirk and its people are contained in his writings that I felt that the time was ripe to reprint "Cairntable Rhymes," thus ensuring that future generations may have the opportunity to enjoy the work of Thomas Floyd, and at the same time put on record much of the life and times of bygone days in Muirkirk.

JAMES TAYLOR

2 The Style,
Muirkirk,
Ayrshire KA18 3RS

GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK (Continued)

with a light, to attend to the boys, the father searched the closets, examined the window, and looked up the chimney, but could find no indication of anyone having been in the attic. After removing the boys downstairs he locked the door, and kept it locked till he obtained the tenancy of a house in the village.

It has often been said that truth is stranger than fiction, and it was truly so in this case. I singled out the three detailed stories because I had absolute faith in the veracity of the tellers, and I can vouch for the truth of the attic incident, as the railwayman was my father, and I was one of the boys.

The old house was demolished a number of years ago, and the stones were used in the building of the shepherd's house nearer Springhill.

THOMAS FLOYD

Woodside, Muirkirk.

THE END



THE AUTHOR

GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK (Continued)

with his dog lying at his feet, when he heard the sound of footsteps ascending the stair, entering the attic, walking round the floor, then departing the way they had come. Tweedie said he saw nothing, but when the footsteps were heard in the attic the dog gave an unearthly howl, leapt through the attic window, and was found next morning badly injured by the broken glass, and by neither coaxing nor force could the dog be induced to enter the attic as long as it lived.

A milliner, named Miss Macfarlane, said she was one night working late, preparing hats for a wedding party. When she had finished she hung them on the snags of an old tree stump she kept in the attic for that purpose, and retired to rest. She lay a short time viewing the hats and calculating her profits, when without the least warning the stump crashed to the floor. In a fright she drew the bedclothes over her head and sobbed herself to sleep, feeling quite sure the hats were destroyed and that she was ruined. When she wakened in the morning she was overjoyed to find the stump standing, with the hats on the snags undamaged as she had left them.

A Mrs Gibson said her sister had occasion to pass Midhouse one winter night at a late hour. She arrived home in a fainting condition, and told them that when coming past Midhouse a white lady suddenly appeared at her side and kept step with her till near the foot of the square, when she vanished as suddenly as she had appeared. The girls's fright developed into a severe nervous break-down which proved too much for her, and she died shortly afterwards.

The railwayman, after hearing the above stories and a few more in the same strain, was half inclined to cancel his tenacy, but, on second thoughts, as it was a suitable house with a low rental (£1 per annum) he decided to risk it. Three years passed, and during all that time the spook or spooks lay low and did "nuffin." However, one night in November, 1867, three of the family (all boys) who slept together in the attic went up to their bed. They were scarcely under the blankets when a strange moaning sound commenced in the attic, apparently from some person in great pain. One of the boys whispered to his brother—"What is that, Johnnie?" He had scarcely finished speaking when bedclothes, boys, bed, and bed rungs were tossed on to the centre of the floor. And there they were—a mix-up of yelling boys and a sound as if two individuals were wrestling round the attic in a death struggle. When the parents heard the racket the father rushed up the stair, and pushing the door open, cried "In heaven's name what's that?" In an instant all was silent except the sobbing of two of the boys; the other one had fainted. Leaving the mother, who had arrived

GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK (Continued)

very tipsy condition and declared his intention to sleep in Beenie's room. Although advised against it, he did so. The next morning he was asked how he had fared. He replied that he would never tell a living soul his night's experience, and that though they promised him the Wellwood Estate, he would never sleep another night in Beenie's room. Judging from the tipsy condition he was in when he went to bed, he must have spent the night fighting blue devils and pink snakes. Superstition blamed poor Beenie. All the same, from that night till he left the Wellwood with his employer (Mr Critchley) Grass remained a silent, morose, sober man.

About eighty years ago, the Wellwood Home Farm, which at that time stood a few yards from Wellwood House was occupied by an old lady named Mrs Mahoul. As she had spent most of her life on the farm, she was often asked for information anent Beenie and her life story. All the information she could give was that Beenie was just Beenie, and she whilst got a gliff o' her in the bygaun. Her information either proved Beenie's ghost was no myth, or else the old lady was endowed with a supernatural inferior complex. However, when the old Wellwood House was demolished in the late seventies of last century, Beenie must have changed her lodgings, as she has never been seen or heard since.

When some of the younger generation read this article I expect they will consider in "bosh." Nevertheless, Beenie and her "ongauns" were firmly believed in by the old folk of eighty years ago.

MIDHOUSE-OF-KAMES

Midhouse-of-Kames was another old house said to be haunted. It stood on the side of the Springhill Road near where the present Midhouse Row terminates, and comprised a storey and attic, with a stable at one end and a milkhouse and byre at the other. As it is not mentioned in any of the books relating to the history of Muirkirk, its age can only be guessed, but judging from its aged and weather-worn appearance it must have been a farmhouse for a long period of years, and why and when it was reduced to the status of an ordinary dwelling-house I am unable to say. However, it was let as a dwelling-house in 1863, and a railwayman who had been transferred to Muirkirk applied for and obtained its tenancy, but before he occupied it the neighbours warned him that the house was haunted, and told him a number of hair-raising stories anent the strange "doings" of the spook or spooks. Some of the stories are worth repeating. An old shepherd named Tweedie, who had been employed at Midhouse and slept in the attic at night, said he was sitting at the fireside one night reading,

FOREWORD

In essaying to write a brief introduction to this, the Posthumous Edition of the poems and writings of Thomas Floyd, the writer advances in fear and trembling—fear, inspired by the knowledge that, while yielding to no one in his appreciation of the work of the author and in admiration and affection for the worth of the man, he is painfully conscious of the fact that the task merits a much more able pen. But to our tale.

Thomas Floyd came of humble and industrious stock, and humble and industrious he was himself through all the years of his long and full life. By humble I do not by any means suggest servility. That state or condition which the modern call an inferiority complex had no place in the make-up of Thomas Floyd.

As a rail-roader he spent practically all his working life in the employment of the old "Sou' West Company" which became merged in what is now known as the London, Midland and Scottish. It was his proud boast that, during all his more than fifty years service he had never once been late for his train. A remarkable record indeed.

Of a rather retiring nature he may have appeared to the stranger or casual acquaintance somewhat cold and distant, or as he himself might put it—blate, but to his intimates he was the "he'rt o' corn," a gentle, generous soul whom it was a pleasure and a privilege to know. Quietly pursuing the "even tenor of his way," he nevertheless heard and saw "a' that was gaun on." The humour of a situation never escaped him, and his pithy and pawky remarks on the topics of the times were a never-ending source of delight to his confidants.

Opinions of his own he certainly had. He also had the courage to give expression to them, not from the house-tops it is true, but in soft, well-modulated tones he could justify the faith that was in him with clarity, conviction and sincerity. Temperate, frugal, and independent, Thomas Floyd could in all truth say of himself—"I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." The following lines by Edgar A. Guest, the great American poet, seem so appropriate that the urge to quote at length is irresistible:—

"

Wisdom now is his who sought
God in every act and thought,
But behind his friendly door
We shall sit and talk no more.

High above the crowds that press
Seeking fortune and success,
And the traffic's roar and hum,
To his room h'd bid me come
There, as one who loved to dream,
He would talk of sky and stream.

Open wide his heart would sing
Unto every living thing;
Great his faith that God must be
Close to all that mortals see.

.

He who knew no doubt or fear
While he lived and laboured here,
Now has gained that wisdom which
Far excelleth treasures rich;
Found that great abundant love
Which he was so certain of."

So much for the man; now for his message.

In the preface to the first edition the author did not cite as an excuse for his "bold step" the fulsome praise of fawning friends, nor did he put on "a puir mooth" and furtively pass round the hat. No, like the man he was, he said—"I was vain enough to imagine that my effusions in book form would be acceptable to Muirkirkonians at home and abroad."

As one who has read his work both at home and abroad, the writer can say in all incereity that its mission has been amply fulfilled and its publication more than justified.

While it is true that "Cairntable Rhymes" have primarily a parochial appeal, there is much in this little book that will touch a responsive chord in the hearts of all who recognise that "poetry is the language of the soul."

That Thomas Floyd did not claim to be a poet, "but jist an ord'nar' rhymer," reveals the modesty of the man, but anyone who read's "Life's Early Mornin' " will, I feel sure, agree that he was a poet in the real sone of that much-abused term.

The poems—"Modern Improvements," "Oor Minister," "Effie's Spot," "Wullie an' Bell," "Deid an' Awa'," "Tam Whyte," "Tam Weir," "The Laird o' Meikle's Raw," "Epistle to John Whyte," "Our Good

GHOSTS OF MUIRKIRK

BEENIE

Less than a hundred years ago superstition had still a firm grip on Scotland, and the belief in witches, fairies, ghosts, wraiths, warnings, omens, second sight, and old freits, greatly influenced the lives of the Scottish peasantry. Consequently, most villages in Scotland had a local spook or haunted house, and our own village, always in the front with everything good (and bad) had two—the old Wellwood House and Midhouse of Kames. From stories handed down to us, Wellwood House was haunted by a young lady known as Beenie's Ghost.

Who Beenie was when she was in the flesh, and what the tragedy was that prevents her from resting in her grave, tradition has left us guessing. In the Wellwood House there was an upstairs apartment known as Beenie's room, and this room was said to be her headquarters. When she took a notion to have a midnight ramble, she was seen to leave the room, flit down the stairs and glide away in the direction of the "Lang Plantin'." This plantin' extended from Entryhead to Haystackhill on the south side of the Cumnock road, and was composed of giant beech, ash, and plane trees. Some of the old trees may still be seen on the very edge of a later plantation. The "Lang Plantin'" was said to be a favourite howf of Beenie's, as she was often seen there walking under the trees weeping and wringing her hands. If she chanced to be disturbed she disappeared in the direction of Wellwood House.

On the stair leading to beenie's room one of the steps was stained with several splashes of what looked like blood, and the servants when washing the stair always scrubbed the stain off, but the next day they were there bright as ever. About the middle of last century a Muirkirk joiner named Swinton was down at the Wellwood House doing some repairs, and one of the servants drew his attention to the step. He said he would soon sort that. So he removed the step and put in a new one. Strange to say, in less than two hours he was a corpse. To explain this, however, Swinton had been on the sick list for some time, and was taking a tonic prescribed by his doctor to be taken after food. The tonic was sent down along with his dinner to the Wellwood every day during the time he was there, but on that particular day, owing to some mistake, a bottle of poison was sent down instead of the tonic. Swinton, without noticing the difference, took it after his dinner, and died as stated above—a pure accident and coincidence. But superstition blamed poor Beenie.

In the early sixties of last century a young man named Jack Grass was under-keeper on Wellwood Estate. He was a harem-scarum dare-devil, and was oftner drunk than sober. One night, after being up in the village drinking with some companions, he arrived back at the Wellwood in a

OLD SPOOTS (Continued)

took place in the Parish Church. The others named were all popular and useful in their day.

Meikle's Well was one of the principal sources of water, and was situated in the park behind Meikle's Raw. It was a genuine spring, and proved a good stand-by in times of drought. It derived its name from James Meikle, a noted blacksmith in the village. He was laird of Meikle's Raw, and had his smithy at the east end. However, before the Row was transformed into a two-storeyed block, it was converted into a dwelling house. Mag Muir's Well is still in existence in the garden, and then, as now, many patrons preferred to sample the wares as supplied in the premises on the street line.

Alas! The exigency of modern life created greater demands, and the old spoots that had for generations served the village faithfully and well had to go. Deemed too old, too slow, and out of date, they made their exit, and left behind them memories and recollections that make me often vainly wish I was a boy again, skelpin' up Geordie Lees's Brae, to tig the Spoot, and slocken my drouth with draughts of Adam's Wine "keppit" in my bunnet croon.

The Ironworks side of the village had also a few spoots. There was one at the back of the square, near an opening between the houses. Another was at the foot of the Linkieburn, near to the burn. It was known as Logan's Spoot. Another was on the side of the road, half-way between the Linkieburn and the Heigh Weighs. There was one in front of the Red Raw, and another at the entrance to the Stableyard.

The first-mentioned was Lade water, while the water for the others was conveyed by a tile drain from the Cairntable Cauldron— now known as the Boxed Well (later known as Ower the Watter Reservoir)—to a reservoir near the furnace bank.

Lady," "Modern Economy," and "Wa(u)r Breid," together with "Some Old Legends" at the end, might well have been sub-titled—"A Muirkirk History of Our Own Time," as they constitute a record both unique and reliable.

In conclusion may I give expression to the conviction that this "last will and testament" of Thomas Floyd will make many new friends for the poet, and with real and heart-felt affection for a dear and kindred soul I say with his old friends:—

VALE

There's a froom on the broo o' Cairntable,
There's a sab in the sang o' the Ayr;
All vanished their pride, for in cosy Woodside
There's an ancient, unoccupied chair.
There's a prayer soarin' onward and upward
Frae he'rts filled wi' love unalloyed—
Oh! licht lie the earth o' the land o' his birth
On the breist o' the bard Thomas Floyd.

JAMES DONAGHY.

Bayonne, N.J., U.S.A.

OLD SPOOTS (Continued)

the schoolboys, who, when hot and tired playing at "tig," "hi-spy," "ko yo," and other games, would gather round it and slocken their drouth with draughts of Adam's Wine "keppit" in their bonnet croons. They had to be careful and "sook" the water through their teeth to prevent an inquisitive "powheid or scur" from exploring their "innards."

Kirkhope's Spout.—The next was Kirkhope's Spout, which stood a yard or so out from the Glasgow Road entrance to what is now Mr Steele's Drapery House (Trotter's Shop). It gave a fair supply of very good water, and owing to its central position was most patronised. In the summer evenings it was usual to see nearly a score of villagers with their stoups standing around it waiting their turn to get their "gang o' water," as it was then called. When supplied with their "gang," which was generally contained in two wooden stoups—each stoup holding from three to four gallons—it was carried home and placed in a recess made for the purpose in the entry between the fore and trance doors. The recess extended under the end of the kitchen bed, a position which is far from the present-day ideas of hygiene. The Spout was also a happy hunting ground for the village gossips, where all the faults and failings of the villagers were discussed and criticised. It derived its name from Andrew Kirkhope, who had a butcher shop in the premises now occupied by Mr Steele, Draper.

There was another small spout halfway up the Glasgow Road, near where the E.U. Church now stands. As it seldom functioned, it wasn't of much account.

Another small one was at the top of The Stile, almost opposite the entrance to Park Cottage. It was a great favourite with the villagers, but after the advent of the New Cemetery, a fear got up about its contamination from that source. A sample of the water was then taken and analysed, when it was found to be of excellent quality. However, the spout has now practically dried up.

Kay's Spout.—The next was Kay's Spout. It was fixed in the wall near the steps leading to the Nurse's Home. It gave a regular and good supply of water, and as it had to supply the Furnace Road and Smallburn, it was kept busy. It derived its name from Thomas Kay, the landlord of the Black Bull Hotel (now the Eglinton Arms Hotel).

There were also a number of wells throughout the village, such as the Christenin' Well, Meikle's Well, Gibson's Well, Mag Muir's Well, and Macartney's Well. The Christenin' Well surely deserves special mention. It was a wee spring on the brae of the Kirk Burn, near the waterfall. It was so named because its water was always used in the font when a baptism

OLD SPOOTS OF MUIRKIRK

Seventy years ago our village had a different aspect than at the present time. It contained a few houses of more than one storey, and a goodly number of thatched ones still adorned the Main Street. Sanitation was conspicuous by its absence. Gravitation water was non-existent, and the villagers had to rely on spoots and wells for their water supply.

As these old spoots and wells for many years played an important role in the economics of the village, and were associated and interwoven with the lives of dead and gone generations, it is fitting that they should be awarded "Honourable Mention" in the annals of the village, and, believing that they may interest some of the younger folk, I have ventured to name and describe them as they appeared to me when I was a boy.

Effie's Spoot.—Commencing at the east end of the village, we had Effie's Spoot. It was fixed in a low stone wall on the north side of the Douglas Road, close to the Kirk Burn. For many years it gave a regular and copious supply of good water, but to-day, owing to draining operations, it has practically stopped functioning. Tradition makes it the oldest spoot in the village, and may have supplied Garron before Muirkirk was in existence. It is said to be the second best water in Scotland, but how and when it gained that distinction tradition has failed to enlighten us. It was supposed to derive its name from a certain Effie Johnstone, who lived in a thack house which stood where Mr McMichael's property now stands.

Coal Sanny's Spoot.—The next was Coal Sanny's Spoot. It was fixed in the west side of the Kirkburnhead road, a few yards above the entrance to the R.C. Chapel. It gave a limited supply of very good water, but was apt to fail in dry weather. "Coal Sanny" was said to be a hawker who sold rubbin' stanes, whitenin', and coal in small quantities to the villagers.

Heid Inns Spoot.—The next was the Heid Inns Spoot. It was fixed in a wall on the opposite side of the street from the Heid Inns (now the Masons Arms), hence its name. It gave a fair supply of good water, and was more dependable than Coal Sanny's. It also played an important part in the lives of the Main Street schoolboys. In the play-hour they used to run races from the School gate, up Geordie Lees's Brae, tig the spoot, and back. If a runner failed or omitted to tig the spoot, he was ruled out of the race.

Cuthbertson's Spoot.—The next was Cuthbertson's Spoot, which stood in front of John Cuthbertson's public house—lately the Douglas Arms, and now un-occupied. Its water was inferior to others, as it was brought by a pipe from the open Stile Burn. All the same, it was very popular with

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A HUNDRED YEARS AGO (Continued)

ers, and as the Pats and Macs were not exactly in love with each other, the Coutburn was the scene of a few Donnybrooks. (The ruins can be seen first right after Springhill).

Cochrane Lodge, as the name implies, belonged to the then lord of the manor. His family name was Cochrane, and he owned the Tar Works and supplied the British Navy with tar. The Lodge was occupied by one of the railway contractors during the railway's construction. It stood empty after that, and soon became a ruin, which can still be seen south of the Sanquhar Road past McAdam's Cairn.

The Blue To'er was a thatched but-and-ben cottage that stood on the west bank of the Garpel, near the railway.

Glen Cottage was the same type of house; the ruin is still visible.

Garpel Ha' stood on the side of the Garpel, a short distance above where the Slackshaw Burn joins it. It seems to have been a house of large dimensions, and was occupied a hundred years ago. Who it belonged to, and who lived in it seems to be wrapped in mystery. It apparently had some connection with the Cochrane Lodge, as a private road connected the two places. From its position its ruins must have been buried under the debris of the adjacent quarries.

Aikler House—Mr Fairbairn (our well-known antiquary), I understand, says that Aikler House stood on the slope of a knove about a quarter of a mile south from Wellwood House, and that a solitary tree marks the spot, but local tradition has it that Aikler House stood on the site where the ruins of Knoweheid now stands, and from its position marked on an old map I have before me I am inclined to believe tradition is correct.

A few of the place names in the Parish have been altered from what they were a hundred years ago—Aird's Green was Ayr's Green, Ponesk Burn was Powness Burn, Tardoes was Tardoors, Ayrs Moss was Airdsmoss, Stonebriggs was Stanebriggs, and Cronberry was Cranberry.

How many ruins will the next 100 years bring? Perhaps the whole village!



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO (Continued)

Townfoot stood a short distance west from Townhead.

Low Dalfram was the home of the Bauld Lapraik. Its site is marked by a monument erected to his memory.

The two Treochs stood on the south bank of the River Ayr, in close proximity to the old Iron Forge.

Though not in the Parish, I may say that North and South Lammerhaughs are both in ruins.

—————

In the Garpel Water district, Bankhead, Megslea, Old Rigger', Heich Catchieburn, Midhouse, Coutburn, Cochrane Lodge, Glen Cottage, Tibbie Pagan's, Blue To'er, Garpel Ha', and Aikler House have all yielded to decay.

A hundred years ago Bankhead was a farmhouse, and stood where the workmen's houses now stands. It was farmed for many years by the grandfather of our esteemed townswoman, Mrs McMurren, Furnace Road.

Megslea stood where the Golf Links now are—a few trees mark the site.

Old Rigger' stood on the opposite side of the burn from the present Rigger'. It was a but-an-ben thatched cottage.

The Heich Catchieburn stood near the road to Auldhouseburn. It was a double row of thatched houses—twelve houses in each row. Some of the houses were occupied up till the middle of last century.

Midhouse stood at the west end of Midhouse Row (of course there was no row then). The dwelling-house was storey and attic, with the milk-house and byre at one end, and the stable at the other, all in a line. The farm was for a long period leased by another of Mrs McMurren's ancestors, and Mrs McMurren posses a photo of a black-faced ewe bred on Midhouse Farm. This ewe lived nineteen years, and produced forty-two lambs. She had four lambs at birth more than once. The photograph shows the ewe standing with four of her lambs. Midhouse had the unenviable reputation of being haunted—of which more anon.

The Coutburn Raw ruins are known to almost everyone in the village, and a source of inspiration to some of our local poets. A hundred years ago it was the hub of the village. With the Tar Works going and the Polquharnel Pits in full swing, it was a lively wee place. When the Auchinleck and Muirkirk railway was being made a large number of navvies lodged in the Coutburn. They were mostly Irishmen and Highland-

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A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A hundred years ago Muirkirk Parish contained a number of farm houses and one or two notable places that have long since succumbed to the ravages of a century of time. Some are standing in ruins, while others have disappeared and left only their names to tell they have been.

In the Greenock Water district Hallsmuir, Cleuchheid, Cairniebottom, East Braeheid, West Braeheid, the Old Manse, Lamonburn, Harwood, Burnhoose, and Shawknowe have all gone west.

Hallsmuir stood about half-a-mile south-east from the Priesthill Farm.

Cleuchheid, apparently a small clachan, stood at the head of Ponesk Glen.

East Braeheid was on the north slope of the Sware Hill, a short distance south-east of Blackside, while West Braeheid stood near where the road turns down to Mansefield.

The Old Manse stood where Mansefield farmhouse now stands; probably when the present manse was built the Old Manse was converted into a farmhouse.

Harwood stood about a quarter mile west from the Forkings Cottage. Its site was lately discovered. In an old map of Muirkirk Parish dated 1828 it is marked as a ruin.

Burnhoose stood on the east side of the Burnfoot Burn, a short distance north from Burnfoot.

Shawknowe was the old name for the ruins seen on Burnfoot moor. Its later name was Johnstone's Tilework.

In the River Ayr district Muirfoot, Ashieburn, Waukmill, Wellwood House, Muirmill, Townfoot, the two Treochs, and Low Dalfram have also disappeared.

Muirfoot stood on the east side of the Ponesk Burn, near where it joins the Ayr.

Ashieburn stood on the east side of the burn of the same name.

The Waukmill is still a standing ruin, and local history is strangely silent anent its origin.

Wellwood House, now a picturesque ruin, was built on the site of an older house. In a book entitled "The Streams of Ayrshire," the author suggests that the old Wellwood House was built on the site of a still older one.

SOME OLD LEGENDS (Continued)

A popular legend was that a keg of whisky was buried somewhere in the vicinity of the Sanquhar Brig. According to the legend it was buried there by a smuggler who intended to remove it when an opportunity occurred. The opportunity never came. The smuggler was caught and transported to Botany Bay, and the whisky still reposes in its peaty bed, as it was often searched for, but never found. Some day it may be found, and, from its age, should be worth sampling. Another was that the first sod of the Wellwood Pit was cut on the day the Battle of Waterloo was fought. It would be interesting if this legend could be authenticated. In our grandfathers' time this pit was known as the Engine Pit, in our fathers' time as the Big Pit. It now enjoys the proud title of Wellwood No. 1.

It is told that a man once lived in the village who was of such gigantic proportions that he could push his hand into a sack of meal and lift a whole peck on his open palm (German liars please note). Curiously enough his name was Little.

The village had also its strong man (a farmer) who was endowed with such prodigious strength that one day, while carting turnips from the field, the horse and cart slipped into a bog hole. He immediately "buckled tae," and succeeded in lifting both horse and cart on to terra firma. On another occasion, while carting coal from Glenbuck, he lifted such an immense piece of coal that its weight caused his feet to sink down into the hard turnpike road. He was also impervious to the sensation of pain. One day, while ploughing, one of the horses trampled on his foot and broke the bone of his instep. Nothing daunted, he took off his boot, put on an old slipper, and finished his day's ploughing, with the broken foot going flip-flap all the time. Another day while thrashing in the barn a corn pickle flew into his eye. He never knew it was there till it began to grow and sprout. This remarkable worthy was known to this day as M-h-se.

A village worthy had such a long tongue that he could wipe his nose, take a mote out of his eye, and tickle his ears with it. He was known to this day as the Old Gardener.

Another worthy had such a long nose that while standing at Kay's corner he had to press it to the side to allow people to get past. He was known to this day as Ringan Tinnock.

A legend that puzzled my young brain was that every time the "Leeshaw Stane" heard the Kirk bell ringing it walked done to the River Ayr and took a drink (Do you see the point?).

No doubt some of the above stories look rather tall, but I have jotted them down exactly as I heard them related by certain auld residents of fifty years ago.

P O E M S

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS

In the east neuk o' Ayrshire, there stands an auld toon,
Surrounded wi' muirlan's—cauld, dreary, an' broon,
Where reek, black and stinkin', turns daylicht tae mirk—
Its name, ye'll hae guessed it, auld reekie Muirkirk.

Tho' placed away up in the cauldest o' climes,
Oor reekie auld clachan keeps pace wi' the times,
In modern improvements it's no far ahin',
And weel to the front wi' the Ratepayers' tin.

To start the improvements we got gravitation,
The Authorities swore 'twas the best in the nation;
Noo this was nae swagger, for jist let me wink,
The water they gave us is baith meat and drink.

Then cam' the new drainage, a wonderfu' thing,
It forms at Kates Ha' a fine chalybeat spring,
Whose grand healing virtues I'll mention but two—
It sickens the corbies, and pushioned a coo.

Oor presnt Toon Cooncil, containin' the seven,
Received a commandment (they said 'twas from Heaven),
By hook or by crook, ere the three years wid pass,
To enlighten the toons-folk, an' treat them to gas.

So when a few squabbles and rackets had been,
The pipes and the lamp-posts appeared on the scene,
And, joy to relate it, in seven or eight days,
The hale o' the clachan wi' gas was ablaze.

An' wad ye believe it, the gas was sae bricht,
Folk reekit their glesses tae see through the licht,
The stars they were thinkin' the sun hadna set,
And the huffy auld moon hid her face in the pet.

An' losh me, the Cooncil, big overgrown boys,
They gazed at the lamps like a bairn at its toys;
Each said to himsel' as he strokit his chin—
At the next big election I'm shair tae get in.

But lo! when a fortnight or sae had come roon,
The gas bill appeared an' it altered the tune,
When the Cooncil had read it, it made them aghast,
Thirty pounds for a fortnight! Losh, this canna last!

Then followed a confab, 'twas lively I'm shair,
Some said that the meetin' was closed without prayer;
When the gas bill is mentioned the Cooncil turns pale,
For the gas is suspended, the lamp-posts for sale.

TIBBIE'S BRIG: A LAMENT

Stay! curious stranger, pause an' view
A puir auld brig that ance wis new
 Without defect,
But ledgeless, rent, an' totter' noo—
 A de-ri-lekt.

For mony a year I've been the pride
O' Muirkirk natives, far an' wide;
 But noo, alas!
Misfortunes black rough ower me ride—
 A ruined mass.

The pooers that be—a careless lot—
Hae left me here in grief tae rot,
 Forsaken quite.
But, by my sang, I'd mak' things hot
 If I could write.

If only I wid jist be spairt,
Tae hae a crack wi' Wellwood's laird,
 My plea tae mak';
He sune wid hae me a' repair'd
 For Tibbie's sake.

The foamin' Garpel saps ma doun';
An' maks attempts tae bring me doon,
 When its in flood;
Thae bauld attempts they mak' me froon,
 An' fire ma bluid.

But though at times it crousley craws,
The flood gaes past an' doon it fa's;
 I get redress;
It ripples roun ma time-staint wa's
 Wi' saft caress.

An' stranger, see that wee green knowe,
Whaur twa auld trees gey lanely growe;
 'Twas neath their shade
That Tibbie sat an' wagged her pow
 An' verses made.

O' twa auld sangs that ne'er shall fade
As lang's a herd wears crook an' plaid,
 An' ca's his ewes
On Garpel's braes, roun' by the Lade,
 An' Wellwood's howes.

SOME OLD LEGENDS

As far as I can remember there was a legend current among the "Auld Folks" in the village that, when the road between Muirkirk and Sanquhar was completed the stagecoach made one trip and then abandoned it. However, from an Edinburgh Almanac, dated 1829, I find there was a regular posting service between Glasgow and Carlisle via Muirkirk and Sanquhar. Post-horses were stationed at Strathaven, Sanquhar, Dumfries, and Gretna Green. There was also a posting service between Edinburgh and Ayr via Carnwath and Muirkirk. Post-horses were stationed at Carnwath, Douglas-mill, and Old Cumnock. There was also a carrier service between Edinburgh and Muirkirk. Carriers left Edinburgh for Muirkirk every Tuesday, and left Muirkirk for Edinburgh on the same day. Their headquarters were at Wilson's, 116 Grassmarket, Edinburgh, and at The Inn, Muirkirk. Muirkirk at that time boasted a Post Office, A. McCaul being the Postmaster. Letters were also despatched from Edinburgh to Muirkirk on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Letters were also despatched from Muirkirk to Edinburgh on the same days. Letters were delivered in the village on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—one delivery each day. Glenbuck is not mentioned. We have made great strides since then, with our trains, motors, and numerous postmen. Were our grandfathers to come back from the Great Beyond it would be difficult to make them believe this was the same world they departed from less than a century ago.

Another legend that went the rounds was that during the "killing times" in Scotland a trooper was pursuing a Covenanter round the foot of Cairntable when the trooper plunged into the Boiling Well, and was drowned, horse and all. Now, anyone visiting the well at the present time would be at a loss to understand how such a legend originated, because this once curious and interesting natural phenomenon has been allowed to dwindle to the dimensions of an ordinary hill drain but fifty years ago it was a round deep pool, a dozen feet or more in diameter. The whole of its bed was covered with large abolitions of churning sand and water, giving it the appearance of a boiling cauldron. Hence its name. At that time it was a favourite resort of the villagers. On the Sunday afternoons large numbers visited it to pree its waters and enjoy the glorious view of the hill and moor. The auld folk sat on its heathy margin and "ca'd the crack," while the young folks commandeered a fir pole from the nearest sheep brig and pushed it down through the churning sand and then released it, when the pressure of the water sent it bounding into the air. "Tossing the caber," they called it. Now, if the well was of such dimensions fifty years ago, it would probably be larger and deeper in the 17th century. So there may be some truth in the legend after all.

A RAMBLE (Continued)

Where sheep and cattle quietly browse,
And lambs their mimic races run
Beneath the glorious summer sun

Man's labour here in bygone days
Placed on the knowes great bings of blaes.
No doubt when man first placed them there
They proved an eyespore, stark and bare,
But Nature loathes a naked earth,
And from her womb procured a birth,
And clad and made the bings sublime
With crimson robes of fragrant thyme.

The path now takes a downward turn,
And brings in view Glen Eshaburn;
Viewed from below or from above,
Its pleasing aspect claims your love;
The spreading trees and grassy plots
Make one of Muirkirk's beauty spots.

And on a knowe beside the wood
The ancient farm of Easthoose stood;
A vestige of it still remains—
An ingle jamb and crumbling stanes.
The family circles all are gane,
That gathered round that ingle stane;
Their griefs, their joys, love, hopes, and fear
Have left no trace or record here.

I leave the glen, and cross the rill
That wimples past the old Wauk-Mill,
And pass the field where stands alone
That silent sphinx—the Lightshaw Stone;
Wise savants say it had its birth
When waters brooded o'er the earth.

Near Slockendrooth 'twas good to see
The white windflowers on Gavin's lea,
And as I homeward hied my way,
I felt 'twas good for man to stray,
And wisely spend his leisure hours
'Mong Nature's gems—her wee wildflowers,
And know from what he learns abroad—
The wisdom of Almighty God.

TIBBIE'S BRIG (Continued)

O' pleasures sweet I've still a few,
For roamin' bairns come here tae woo,
The simmer oors,
An' ramble roun' wi' joy tae pu'
The Muirlan' floo'ers.

Noo, if ye a' wid give a dime
Tae buy a scart o' stane an' lime
Tae mak' me trig,
I'll bless ye a' tae end o' time—
Auld Tibbi'es Brig.

LIFE'S EARLY MORNIN'

In life's early mornin' I've often gane roamin'
Through Wellwood's green valleys, an' dark mossy dells,
An' played by the Garpel frae daylicht tae gloamin'
'Mang green waivin' brekins and noddin' blae bells.

An' roved up Cairntable's dark heather-clad mountain,
At hounds an' hare playin', when freed frae the schuil;
An' searched for blaeberreries roon nature's wee fountain,
That flows frae the cairn on the broo o' the hill.

Then doon through the heather wi' steps licht an' springin'
I roam'd through the quarries an' roon by Rigen'
To listen wi' rapture the glad mavis singin'
His soul-stirrin' music in Auldhouseburn glen.

An' tae the Ha' Wud whaur aul' Greenock rejoices,
Neath lang yellow catkins an' white blossomed slae,
Aft, aft I hae waunert tae gether big posies
O' primroses an' violets that bloomed on the brae.

A wad gie a' this worl' again tae be rantin',
A bare-fitted laddie through benty Kirksmuir,
As happy an' free as the lark that wis chantin'
His heavenborn music that gladdened the air.

But noo I am Failin', and entered life's gloamin';
Thae gled boyish rambles nae mair I'll enjoy;
Yet whiles whan I'm dreamin' again I am roamin'
Through Wellwood's green valleys—a licht-hearted boy.

OUR MINISTER

Noo frien's, ye'll see, I hae nae doot,
That I am jist a wee put oot.
For why? My rhyme is a' about
Oor Minister.

Wha on the street oor steps wil stay?
An' shake oor hauns six times a day,
Spiers for oor health, then hastes away—
Oor Minister.

When men and maidens' love gets hot,
An' maks them try the marriage lot,
Wha blythely comes an' ties the knot—
Oor Minister.

Wha shares oor grief, oor joys, oor cares,
An' guides us through life's simple snares,
An' wi' the puir his substance shares—
Oor Minister.

Wha tells us o' oor Lord wha gave
His precious life oor souls tae save
That we micht live beyond the grave—
Oor Minister.

When we in pain an' sickness lie,
An' death on shadowy wings draws nigh,
To whom do we for solace cry—
Oor Minister.

An' lo, when Death, that awfu' fien',
Has stilled oor he'rts an' closed oor een,
Wha calms an' soothes each weepin' frien'—
Oor Minister.

Lov'd by his flock, revered by all,
Alike in humble hame or hall,
He thus responds tae duty's call—
Oor Minister

Then ane an' a' we hope an' pray
That he'll be spairt for mony a day,
Tae point tae heaven an' lead the way—
Oor Minister

A RAMBLE

Whene'er the sun's effulgent rays
Caress the wild flowers on the braes,
Where hermit Ayr flows to the sea
Through Semple's haughs and Lawson's lea,
'Tis then I love to walk abroad
And view the work o' Naure's God.

How good it is that I may stray
Where nature all her charms display—
To linger by the river where
Great yellow catkins scent the air,
And buttercups and mayflowers sweet
In beauty blossom round ny feet.

'Mid Nature's gems I linger long,
Enraptured with the lav'rock's song;
Wee angel-birds, they soar on high,
And pour their songs to earth and sky,
Far from my sight, on throbbing wings,
They hail with song the King of Kings.

I find a pathway smooth and wide,
With giant trees on either side;
From gnarled tree trunks great branches spread
And meet together o'er my head,
And, interlacing, Nature weaves
A canopy of whisp'ring leaves.

The haunting murmur of the trees,
The cadence of the birds and bees,
And from the tree-top high above
The love-call of a wooing dove—
My soul in tune with each and all,
I stay my steps at Crossflatt Hall.

Embowered 'mong shrubs and stately trees,
Its beauty all my senses please;
Two hundred years of calm and storm
Have circled round its ancient form,
It now displays what age bestows—
A dignified and quiet repose.

The pathway leaves the woodland ways,
And leads to Crossflatt's upland braes,
Its verdant fields and grassy knowes,

MEGSLEA

INSCRIBED TO JAMES DONAGHY, U.S.A.

Ay, Jamie, I'm leevin' an' prood tae sae fit,
As fat as a powny an' daein' my bit
In diggin' my gairden; but man, dae ye ken,
The diggin's a socker at three score an' ten.

A' hippit an' stiff as a petrified wulk,
My only refreshment's a drink o' soor mulk;
But dod, man, I'm happy as lang as I see
The wee gowans bloomin' on bonnie Megslea.

Yae mornin' last week as I strissled an' strived
Tae howk up the dockens, yer letter arrived;
I threw doon the spade, sent the dockens to hang,
An' in at the ingle I read yer wee sang.

I guess when ye wrote it the muse was in tid,
For, by my sang, Jamie, it truly was guid;
Near chokit wi' laughin', says I tae the wife—
"Jim's notes on the Yankees are true tae the life."

The land o' the dollars ye tell me is braw,
Wi' lakes an' big rivers, skyscrapers an' a',
But, Jamie, I guess ye wad far raither see
The wee gowans bloomin' on bonnie Megslea.

Nae doot tae a Yankee oor lanscape looks tame,
But dod, man, it circles the place I ca' hame,
An' dear tae my he'rt is the moorlan' an' bent
Where lang vanished years o' my boyhood were spent.

Whit he'rtfelt emotions Remembrance can weave,
That mak's my love greater the langer I leeve,
An' mak's me baith happy an' sad when I spen'
A quait leisure 'oor on the knowes at Rigen'.

Noo, Jamie, ye hint ye hae somehoo struck "Ile,"
Then dinna be backward in makin' yer pile,
An' when tha's accomplished come hameward an' see
The wee gowans bloomin' on bonnie Megslea.

MEMORIES O' JEAN

I stray beside the Garpel, Jean,
And through the ferny grove,
An' rove through Wellwood's valley, Jean,
Whaur we were wont tae rove;
Sae happy wi' love's glamour, Jean,
We waunert ower the lea,
Whaur birds sang tae oor woo'in', Jean
An' earth wis heaven tae me.

The laverock's sang seem'd sweeter, Jean,
The glens and braes mair fair,
The floo'ers shed sweeter fragrance, Jean,
Then when ye wasna there.
The Garpel crooned far sweeter, Jean,
The mossy stanes amang,
But in oor throbbin' bosoms, Jean,
Love crooned a sweeter sang.

The heathbell an' the gowan, Jean,
Bloom roun' the mossy seat,
Whaur we hae sat an' coorted, Jean,
An' held communion sweet,
An' learnt that gran' auld story, Jean,
That nane but love can tell;
Oor he'rts drank in its cadence, Jean,
Enraptur'd 'neath its spell.

Wi' achin' h'ert I linger, Jean,
By Springhill's auld haw tree;
Its scented snaw-white blossoms, Jean,
Remin's me aye o' thee,
For 'neath them we hae trysted, Jean,
An' pledg'd oor love anew;
Then earth tae me wis Heaven, Jean—
My cup o' bliss was fu.

But like the snaw-white blossom, Jean,
Ye faded day by day;
I saw wi' deepest sorrow, Jean,
I couldna mak' ye stay.
For daith wi' me contested, Jean,
And forced a prior claim;
When next the haw tree blossomed, Jean,
He cam' and took ye hame.

And left me here in sorrow, Jean,
Tae roam thae scenes ma'lane,
Consumed wi' anguished yearnin's, Jean,
Tae hear thy voice again,
Tae feel again thy presence, Jean,
But oh! that canna be;
But, while I live, I'll cherish, Jean,
Fond memories o' thee.

MODERN ECONOMY

A man sat musin' in his chair
Yae Monday efternin,
When, lo, his lassie frae the schuil
Cam' breengin', bangin' in,
An' shouted, as she waded on high
A wee blue-battered book—
"A woman's landit at the schuil
Tae teach us a' tae cook.
Instead o' vulgar soda scone,
An' horrid oatmeal cake,
Or yon teuch mashlum bannocks that
My grannie used tae bake,
I'm gaun tae mak' French terts an' buns,
Steakpie an' sausage roll,
Mik puddin' an' a thing they ca'
Le-Tod-in-la-de-hole.
An' as the lassies in their turn
Provide the cookin' stuff,
I want a pun' o' bakin' floure
Tae mak' a paste ca'd puff,
Some sugar, saut, a pint o' milk,
A parboiled sausage tae,
The whites o' three big new-laid eggs—
Ye throw the yokes away.
Some butter next, an' kitchen-fee
Tae creesh the bakin' pan."
An' through a perfect host o' wants
Her tongue at random ran;
Till fair annoyed, her faither bawled—
"Stop, stop, God bless my soul;
Ye mean tae feed an army wi'
Le-Tod-in-la-de-hole.
Sae gey and sweirt he bocht the things
(He micht a had mair sense),
An' when the bill was tallied up,
It cam' tae nineteen pence.
He pu'd his beard an' said—"By gosh,
I'm thinking it wad thole
Tae feed us nearly a' the week—
This Tod-in-la-de-hole

TO THOMAS FLOYD, ESQ., OF MUIRKIRK TOWN

FROM JAMES DONAGHY, U.S.A.

I'm in an awfu' pucker, ay, I'm in an awfu' state
In fac' I'm jist as mad as ony hatter;
Oh, there's deil a doot about it, Tam, "I gaed a waefu' gait,"
On the mornin' that I flitted "Ower the Watter."
I was fine an' didna ken it when I strutted in the toon,
I fancied I could bool tae ony batter,
But the wey that things are ordered here wid turn yer noddle roon';
Ay, its different when ye're bidin' "Ower the Watter."
Wi' their gramophones an' radios they mak' a fearfu' din,
An' if ye kick they'll speir ye "What's the matter?"
So ye've aither got tae toddle oot or sit an' listen in;
Oh, it's lively when you're leevin' "Ower the Watter."
An' tae listen tae the linguists wid drive ye tae the booze,
O' English here the feck hae jist a smatter;
Oo've got Germans an' Italians here, an' Spaniards, Poles, an' Jews,
It's a regular tower o' babble "Ower the Watter."
An', when ye get yer denner here, the thing that nettles me,
Is the frozen beef or mutton on your platter;
It's baloney for yer breakfast, ay, an' its coffee for yer tea;
No, I'm no' the least ta'en wi' "Ower the Watter."
Oh, I mind the modest dresses o' the bonnie village belles,
An' the twinkle o' their feet gaun pitter-patter,
But if ye saw the lasses here your braith wid come in spells,
For they're rinnin' nearly naked here "Ower the Watter."
I can see them on the war-path, "a' painted like a brave,"
Their hair as short an' frizzy as a ratter;
It's the fashion, but tae me it's jist the culture o' the cave,
They're danger tae the lieges "Ower the Watter."
Oh, there's wark at bonnie money, here, but if ye want tae leeve,
The wages that ye draw have got tae scatter;
An' here's a wee bit item, Tam, I want ye tae believe—
When ye're workin' here ye're workin' "Ower the Watter."
I've a book o' Rabbie's poems, I've a fiddle aye in tune,
An' a smile ye'll maybe notice through the patter;
But there's something I be seeking a' the time baith up an' doon,
That'll no' be mine as lang's I'm "Ower the Watter."
So I hope some day tae leave them a', the Yankees an' the Coons,
Tae tell the truth I'm tired o' a' their chatter;
Oh, ye'll hear some funny stories, an' I'll treat ye in the Loon's,
When my wee canoe comes scliffin' "Ower the Watter."

THE AULD FOLK'S RE-UNION (Continued)

The ministers were there in force
To say a word or twa, of course,
 An' taste the sautit pie;
But saut's a tonic for the bluid,
An' wi' it a' the pie was guid,
 For deil a bit gaed by.

An' Matha Love, a home-grown chiel,
Adorned the "Chair," an' filled it weel—
 A swankie, muckle man;
His screed o' Burns he didna' shirk,
An' placed Mat Deluge o' Muirkirk
 High 'mang the poet clan.

Noo, suf'rin' reader, I've expressed
My thochts on things that maist impressed,
 Anent the Auld Folk's Spree;
So if ye hap tae think amiss
A word or thocht contained in this,
 I hope ye'll pardon me.

An', in conclusion, let me say
Thae gled Re-unions weel portray
 A love-inspirin' plan,
An' sure foretell the comin' birth
O' what will mak' a heaven o' earth—
 Man's sympathy for man.

Then here's tae thee, ye workin' men,
Wha thus yer time an' labour spen',
 Withoot reward or fee;
But when ye quit this mortal state,
An' tirl at Saint Peter's gate,
 He'll proudly welcome thee.

MODERN ECONOMY (Continued)

The man sat waitin' in his chair
 Next Monday efternin;
Agane his lassie frae the schuil
 Cam' steppin' proodly in
Wi' something in her haun that had
 A tattiechip shop smell,
An' cried—"Her'es Tod-in-la-de-hole,
 I made it a' mysel'."

Oh what a shock yer faither got—
 It took his braith away,
Then made him laugh until ye could
 Hae tied him wi' a strae.
As fac' as daith, withoot a lee,
 As true's a hen's a fowl,
The hale o' Tod-in-la-de-hole
 Wis in a wee roun bowl.

When later on his laughin' dumps
 Had settled doon a wee,
Says he—"Guidwife, I think I'll tak
 The wee thing tae my tea."
But when he tried tae bite the thing,
 It nearly broke his jaw;
Sae shovin' up the winda frame,
 He threw the thing awa'.

As luck wad ha'et, jist at the time
 A tramp was passin' by;
It caught him squarely on the nob,
 An' made him doon tae lie.
An' as he rubbed a risin' lump
 As big's a carpet bool,
He moaned in pain—"Hae I been kicked
 By some infernal mule."

By this a crood had gethered roon
 Tae see whit wis adae,
An' wunnert whit the queer thing was
 That on the causey lay;
Some said it looked like dynamite,
 Or else a meteor stane,
While ithers thocht it was a bomb
 Dropped frae an aeroplane.

The man himsel' picked up the thing,
 An' placed it in a case;
 An' there amang his fossil stanes
 He gies it pride o' place.
 Its record an' its name he has
 Inscribed upon a scroll;
 This fossil cost me nineteen pence—
 Le-tod-in-la-de-hole.

NEVER FASH YER THOOM

When a wee bit hochlin' laddie
 Amang ither bairns at play,
 I whiles gaed hame wi' some complaint,
 My granny then wad say,
 As in beside her auld armchair
 She lovingly made room—
 "He overcomes that tholes, my bairn,
 So never fash yer thoom.

An' through yer life, if want an' care
 Comes snoozin' roon yer door,
 An' mony a yin gangs sneerin' by
 That wis yer freen afore,
 An' leaves ye on the sea o' life
 To either sink or soom—
 He overcomes that tholes, by bairn,
 So never fash yer thoom.

An' if, perchance, dame Fortune may
 Jist think it worth her while
 Tae gie ye a wee bit helpin' haun',
 Then on yer efforts smile,
 That routh o' wealth an' glorious health
 Yer path through life illume,
 "Jist wisely use what God has sent,
 An' never fash yer thoom.

Lang years hae fled since granny dear
 Died in the auld armchair,
 An' mony a faucht I've haen since then,
 An' mony a grief an' care,
 But her gentle voice, like an angel's sang
 Still whispers frae the tomb—
 "He owercomes that tholes, by bairn,
 So never fash yer thoom."

THE AULD FOLK'S RE-UNION—A FEW IMPRESSIONS

Though void o' a poetic skill,
 I twang my lyre wi' richt guid will,
 For surely it is meet
 That some ane, for oor auld toon's sake,
 A rhymin' verse or twa should make
 Anent the Auld Folk's Treat.

For why? The auld folk a' declare
 It was a glorious, grand affair,
 An' fairly took the cake;
 An' yae auld Celt remarked wi' glee—
 "Thim foin rayoonyans tyroth shud be
 Hould three toimes wance a waik."

McCulloch an' his helpers a'
 Received the guests wi' great ecla',
 An' showed us where tae dine;
 So, efter gi'en thanks tae God,
 Tucked in a big by-ordnar' load,
 Washed doon wi' teapot wine.

An' while the tuck was settlin' doon,
 The hum o' voices floated roon'
 Wi' daimont lown "Ha-ha's;"
 Till, caused by some side-splittin' joke,
 A blizzard storm o' laughter broke.
 An' ver-near burst the wa's.

It was a gledsome thing tae see,
 Hoo happy aged folk could be,
 When gethered there tae spen'
 A mirth-inspirin' 'oor or twa,
 Tae chase their cares an' fauchts awa',
 An' wee bit trauchles en'.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

TO JAMES DONAGHY, ESQ., U.S.A.

My gifted and poetic friend,
The season's greetings now I send—
To thee, thy wife, and children dear
I wish a happy, guid New Year.

May God, from whom all blessings flow,
On thee and thine His love bestow;
And in the coming new year bless
Thy hearth and home with happiness.

And may that priceless treasure—health,
Enable thee to toil for wealth,
That comfort may thy homestead cheer,
Through all the coming, glad new year.

And may thy earthly friends be true
(They'll find a genuine friend in you),
And may their friendship round thee press
And crown thy life with pleasantness.

And may the muse attend thee still
And guide thee up Parnassus hill,
Then, mounted on Pegasus' wings,
Still guide thy flight to greater things.

And Jim, I send my thanks to thee
For yon sweet rhyme inscribed to me;
It's good to know and comprehend
That I can claim thee as a friend.

And though the broad Atlantic Sea
Now ebbs and flows 'tween thee and me,
The mutual thoughts of mine and thine
Still fan the flame of Auld Lang Syne.

And if thou should recross the foam
To view again thy childhood's home,
Ill gladly meet and welcome thee
Wheer "Ayr rins truntlin' tae the sea."

A NICHT'S ENJOYMENT

Yestreen my tuitache made a stairt,
The stouns gaed tae my very hert,
An' made me grane;
A thocht ma puir auld heid wad pairt
Wi' gruesome pain.

A' through ma jaws the stounin's gaed,
Then doon ma neck to shoulder blade
In mad career;
I wis sae sair that I wis made
Wi' pain tae sweer.

I jumped an' stampit roon the flair,
An' kicked twa legs richt aff a chair,
In ma distress;
I thocht Glenga' wad be my share,
An' naething less.

I rowed het clouts a' up ma jaws,
An' rubbed ma gums wi' soothin' saws,
Withoot avail;
Wi' maddenin' pain I speeled the wa's,
In sair travail.

I next tried whisky in ma lug,
An' held ma jaw richt ower a jug
O' steamin' tea;
Wi' that the nerve gied sic a rug,
I thocht I'd dee.

Oh, boys, I wis in sic a state,
The blastit pain would not abate,
But stouned awa';
An' tortured at an awfu' rate
Ma puir auld jaw.

Then in despair I tried creosote—
To burn my tongue an' mak' me hot
Was a' it did;
I sent the useless thing to pot,
It did nae guid.

Then in the tuit I tried some snuff,
An' laudinum I took enough
To kill a trade;
This nailed the pain, it took the huff,
An' aff it gaed.

Then, joy, oh joy, I got relief
Frae a' this pain, I think the chief
Man has to bear;
I houp an' trust the torturin' squeef
Comes back nae mair.

Noo, friens, auld Scotland may extole
Her warrior men frae pole to pole—
Brave men forsooth;
Amang them a' no' ane can thole
An achin' tooth.

LOVE AND THE PRIMROSE: AN IDYLL

One balmy, warm, flower-scented day,
Love woke from sleep, and, bent on play,
Strayed in a garden fair,
Where bloomed bright flowers from India's land,
And myrtles waved a stately band,
Of bright exotics rare.

But Love soon tired of all this show,
And, wand'ring listless to and fro,
Passed by a mossy bower;
There hidden from the passers-by,
Its emerald leaves and golden eye,
Love spied a sweet wee flower.

Behind a group of neighbours bold,
This sweet wee flower of palest gold
Was hidden half from view;
Yet from that quiet, secluded bower
The modest, chaste, and pure wee flower
The sweetest odour threw.

So charmed was Love, his langour fled,
And, bending low, "Wee flower," he said,
"Why bloom ye here unseen?"
Some careless hand has placed ye here,
For surely this is not your sphere,
Of Flora's gems the queen.

Then say, wee flower, you'll come with me;
I know you're pining to be free
From all this pomp glare;
And, planted on some burnie's side,
You'll blossom there as Love's sweet bride—
The fairest of the fair.

TAM'S ADDRESS TAE HIS AULD COAT (Continued)

Ne'er fash yer thoom', my auld coat,
Ower what the neebors sae—
Tae send ye tae the ragman's poke
Is what I'll never dae;
'Way doon the years ye served me weel
In sunshine and in storm,,
An' noo ye hap my auld back
An' keep my hurdies warm.

An' you an' me, my auld coat,
Some queer exploits hae seen;
Ye shared in a' my escapades
An' things that shouldna been;
An' when I felt discretion's path—
But , davert, let me see,
I'll let that flee stick tae the wa'
An' wink my ither e'e.

But och-in-ee, my auld coat,
Yer gettin' gey an' frail;
Ye hae an oot-at-elba look,
An' scruffy roon the tail.
Yer back has turned a shiny green,
That aince was navy blue;
Ye've had yer day, my auld coat—
Ye canna aye be new.

Then there's tae thee, my auld coat;
The yae desire I hae
Is when my spirit taks its flicht—
Tae where I daurna say,
They'll fauld my hamely auld coat
About my last remains,
That we may mingle in the grave
A mix o' rags an' banes.

TAM'S ADDRESS TAE HIS AULD COAT

All hail tae thee, my auld coat,
Ye're gettin' gey threed-bare,
For I hae worn ye aff an' on
Near fifty years, I'm shair;
Nae doot yer claith was woven wi'
Guid hamespun, waukit oo,
Sae wel-a-wat, my auld coat,
There' nae claith like ye noo.

An' weel I min', my auld coat
The day I tried ye on,
An' deekit in my brent-new coat
I fekt a perfect don,
An' sallied forth tae capture he'rts
The village maids among—
Ye werena then an auld coat,
An' life an' love were young.

But, och-on-on, my auld coat,
Auld Time keeps on the wing,
An' weel we ken the changin' years
New fads an' fashions bring;
So when the neebors see ye noo
They mak' the rude remark—
"That coat o' Tam's has shairly been
Wi' Noah in the Ark."

An' nearer hame, my ain guidwife
Gey often flytes and says—
"Whit mak's ye weer that auld coat
Abune yer Sunday claes?
It should be in the ragman's poke,
In fac, ye micht as weel
Hae on yon tattie-bogle's coat
That stan's in Semple's fiel'."

And zephyrs sweet will round thee cling,
And murmuring bees on azure wing
Caress thee all day long.
The larks will view thee with surprise,
Then soar with rapture to the skies,
And sing their sweetest song.
So Love then bore the flower away,
And now, 'mong rugged mountains gray,
It Scotland's beauty swells;
On mony a glen and burn side,
It blossomed there—a peerless bride,
And Love beside it dwells.

A HINT

In caustic mood my pen I lift
Tae write this roundalay
On hoo some noble Muirkirk youths
Enjoy their Sabbath day.
'Tis when the midday meal is past,
They quick in croods commence
Tae ramble doon the Cumnock Road,
Tae roost upon a fence.

Alang the tapmaist wire, like craws,
In twa's an' three's they sit,
An' there indulge in filthy cigs,
An' curse an' swear, an' spit,
An' mak day hideous wi' their noise;
But no' a word o' sense
Is spoken by the howlin' youths
Wha roost upon the fence.

They rudely scan each passin' maid
Wi' bold salacious eyes;
Their gracefu' forms an' buddin' charms
They fondly criticise,
An' bellow forth obscene remarks
That wad a saint incense,
An' mak auld Satan blush tae own
The cads upon the fence.

Wi' vulgar stares an' covert sneers
A' passers-by they treat,
An' mak remarks on what they wear,
An' criticise their feet.

An' itherwise amuse themsel's
 At decent folks' expense;
 But if they only saw themsel's
 While roostin' on the fence!

For if thae senseless, callow youths
 Wad richtly use their eyes,
 An' gaze on Nature's glorious book
 Which all around them lies,
 An' ponder on the great First Cause,
 The wherefore and the whence,
 They'll find that life means something mair
 Than roostin' on a fence.

AUTUMN

I roamed one autumn evening
 In Wellwood's woodland ways,
 The evening sun was glinting
 On dark Powharnel's braes;
 But though the sky was smiling,
 The wind was chilly cold,
 As through the glades it whispered;
 The year was growing old.

The russet leaves were falling
 In eddies on the ground,
 And making on the pathway
 A weird and mournfu' sound
 That told the same sad story
 The sighing wind had told;
 They crooned a dirge of sadness;
 The year was growing old.

The lilting of the laverock
 No longer charmed the air;
 The mavis moped in silence
 Among the hedgerows bare;
 But from a bush a robin,
 That coming wants made bold,
 Sang sadly sweet, and plaintive;
 The year was growing old

EPISTLE TO DAVID MILLAR, AYR

Man, Davie, I was prood indeed
 When I received your welcome screed;
 It weel conveys frae end to end
 The he'rtfelt wishes o' a friend
 On my retirement frae the strife
 O' railway engine-drivin' life.

Weel, Davie lad, nae doot ye ken
 I'm vergin' on three score an' ten;
 Lang fifty-six o' them I've given
 In railway wark tae earn a livin',
 An' wi' much faucht an' watchfu' een
 I've kept my workin' record clean.

In a' thae years, I'm prood tae state
 I for my wark wis never late;
 Strong drink! I never felt its poo'er,
 Nor Nicotine's allurin' lure,
 An' maist as yaul as in my prime,
 But Labour dubbed my age a crime.

For in this age o' push an' go
 Three score an' ten is dubbed too slow;
 When time begins tae gray your pow
 "Too old!" is Labour's verdict now;
 "Away! make room for younger men,"
 I'm shunted noo in life's deid-en'.

But though my sun is nearly set,
 There's smeddum in the auld dug yet;
 Though Labour placed me on the shelf,
 Thank God, I can employ myself;
 Wi' nature's God I'll spen' ma 'oors
 An' delve amang my shrubs an' floo'ers.

An' in Woodside's wee hamely biggin',
 When winter's snaw lies on the riggin',
 Snug in beside the ingleneuk
 I'll spen' my time wi' some good book,
 An' thus employed await the ca'
 That sune or late comes tae us a'.

TO THOMAS FLOYD (Continued)

I gang every mornin' tae wark wi' a smile,
An' I'll hae tae admit that at last I've 'struck ile,'
But I'll gether nae gear if I'm here a' my days,
For the ile that I've struck is the ile on my claes.
I hae smoked (and survived it) a five-cent cigar;
I hae drunk their strong coffee, that's blacker than tar,
But oh hoo I'd relish a cup o'guid tea
Whaur the aul' Water Ayr truntles by tae the sea.

The templars'll tell ye America's dry;
It's true there's a drooth, but atween you and I
There's plenty o' whusky, there's beer an' champagne,
For the buddies oot here, man, 'maist a' mak' their ain.
Oh, it's terrible stuff, but they drink it an' grin,
An' after a fuddle they're glaikit or blin'.
If America's dry, every toiler's T.T.
Whaur the aul' Water Ayr truntles by tae the sea.

O the 'buses oot here fairly flee ower the grun',
But the Yanks, keep in min', dinna rin them for fun;
An' if ye wad jaunt ye man pairt wi' the loot,
For ye pey tae get in an' ye pey tae get oot.
I sailed up the Hudson yae braw munelicht nicht,
An' I winna deny 'twas a gey bonnie sicht,
But oh, I'd be prood could I jist get my e'e
On the aul' Water Ayr wimplin' by tae the sea.

There's a' kind o' folk in the land o' the Yank,
I've even met chiels frae the toon o' Clydebank;
But they widna be here if they only had kent
That it tak's a week's wages tae pey a month's rent.
Oh, they're nice swanky hooses I'm bound tae confess,
Wi' six rooms an' no ane the size o' a press;
But a nice but-an'-ben, Tam, wid dae fine for me,
Whaur the aul' Water Ayr truntles by tae the sea.

An' noo, Tam, jist let us shake hauns ower the sea,
As lang as we're leevin' we'll never say dee;
The muse we'll excuse if nae langer she'll hide,
Let the hizzie get busy aince mair at Woodside.
Guid nicht an' guid luck, then, I'm aff tae my bed;
When this exile is ended, Oh man I'll be gled
Some mornin' tae meet ye an' greet ye wi' glee,
Whaur the aul' Water Ayr truntles by tae the sea.

AUTUMN (Continued)

With mournful thoughts of sadness
I viewed the faded flowers
That once had bloomed in sweetness
Among the woodland bowers,
The time the sweet wee primrose
Had starred the braes with gold,
But now their leaves lay withered;
The year was growing old.

The golden sunset quivered
And died on Blacksidin',
The deepening gloaming gathered
In Wellwood's classic glen,
And strange and eerie echoes
Came floating o'er the wold;
In fancy's ear they whispered—
The year is growing old.

Then as I wandered onward
Beneath the gloaming grey,
I mused on bygone summers
Long, long since passed away.
Far, swift had fled the moments,
Till years had onward rolled,
And now a staff I leaned on—
I, too, was growing old.

But God will cause the primrose
To spring to life again,
The lark to charm the mountain,
The mavis woo the glen;
And for the aged and wearied
There's rest within His fold,
Where reigns an endless summer,
And nothing there grows old.



THE VOICES OF NATURE

Away from the village, its sorrows and sin,
Away from the Ironworks, their clamour and din,
One morning I strayed on the Old Sanquhar Road,
To listen to Nature adoring its God.

The sun's bright effulgence was melting away
The mist of the morning from valley and brae,
Revealing in splendour and glorious review
Wardlaw and Cairntable bejewelled with dew.

The voice of the shepherd, deep-toned from the hills,
The cry of the moorcock, the murmur of rills,
The scent of the moorland hung soft in the air;
All breathed a creation and God everywhere.

The lilt of the laverock, 'way up in the blue,
The call of the plover, the wailing curlew,
The scream of the lapwing on breezy Rigen',
The song of the mavis in Auls'burn glen.

The grasshopper's chirp, and the hum of the bee,
The soft sighing zephyrs that stooped in their glee
To kiss the wee gowans that peeped from the sod;
All hymned adoration and praise to their God.

And e'en the auld Garpel that flowed down the glen,
It hymned its Creator again and again;
'Mong green waving brackens it murmured along,
And swelled with its chorus the Paean of Song.

Oh, what a religion, the purest, the best,
No worship of Mammon, no social unrest,
But the voices of Nature, in sweetest accord,
Adoring their Author, Creator, and Lord.

Then back to the village, its sorrow and sin,
Then back to the Ironworks, their clamour and din,
I turned with reluctance, sad thinking the while,
In all God's creation man only was vile.

OLD FOLK'S RE-UNION (Continued)

An' here an' there on ilka haun'
A daimant Darby and Joan,
A' lookin' hale an' soun':
Though fifty years had fled, or mair,
Since they were wed, thae auld anes were
Still on their honemoon.

There maiden ladies, douce an' staid,
Wha's quait decorum weel displayed
A charm that's all their own;
Averse tae be man's help and wife,
They battle wi' the storms o' Life
Unaided and alone.

If there's a snob wha daurs tae sneer
At a' the social kindness here,
I'd put the cuif in airns;
Nae pride nor side had here a share,
For ilka ane frae saits tae chair
Were a' Jock Tamson's bairns.

In summin' up, it seemed tae me
That things were jist as things should be,
In view o' Burns's plan—
A plan approved in Heaven above,
Begot on earth, and born in love—
The Brotherhood of Man.

* * * * *

TO THOMAS FLOYD

FROM JAMES DONAGHY, BAYONNE, U.S.A.

O Tammas, my freen, are ye leevin' or deid?
What's ower ye ava, man, there's never a screed?
But if ye'll no sing, for the sake o' lang syne
Jist sit doon an' list tae this wee sang o' mine.
America, Tam, is a wunnerfu' place,
At least so they say, an' they say't tae yer face;
But, tae tell ye the truth, I wid far raither be
Whaur the aul' Water Ayr truntles by tae the sea.

A FEW IMPRESSIONS ON THE OLD FOLK'S RE-UNION

In answer tae a kind inveet
Tae come an' share the Auld Folk's Treat,
An' spen' a social nicht.
I clappit on my coat and hat,
An' in a motor safe frae wat
I landit there a' richt.

An', bein' raither late than sune,
I doffed my hat an' ventured in,
Gey diffident an' blate;
An', steppin' lichtly ower the flair,
Straucht for a neuk weel frae the chair,
I quaitly took my sait.

As sune as I had settled doon,
An' raised my een tae keek aroun',
I saw a plesant sicht—
Alang the saits in double raws,
The auld anes sat dressed in their braws,
A' smilin' wi' delicht.

An' gosh, the tables groaned an' peched
Aneth an overwhelmin' wecht
O' healthfu', halesome food;
An' when the auld yins did their best
Tae shift that wecht, I truly guessed
'Twas plesant a' an' good.

Each hale auld chiel an' sonsy dame
Nae doot had left their cares at hame—
Their hubbles an' turmoil,
An' for an' 'oor or twa had met,
In social kindness tae forget
Their hardships an' their toil.

Some, raither auld, had ventured here,
Wha's last exit was drawing near
Frae life's evenfu' stage.
An' roon each gran' auld grizzled powe
A halo shed a lichtsome lowe—
The glory o' auld age.

THE SHADOW OF THE GRAVE

The newborn babe, who murmurs at
Its mother's flowing breast,
Is by that mother dearly loved,
And fondled and caressed,
And is the pride and joy of her
Who it its being gave;
Yet over all her gladness hangs
The shadow of the grave.

The village bairns along the street
With gladness romp and play,
And life is to their joyous hearts
One long, bright summer day.
With merry shout they chase the ball,
On high their caps they wave;
Yet over all their gladness hangs
The shadow of the grave.

The youth and maid in daydreams build
Bright castles in the air;
Their fancy weaves glad years to come
Where sorrow has no share.
For life is sweet to man and maid,
When hearts beat strong and brave;
Yet over all their daydreams hang
The shadow of the grave.

The old and frail with feeble steps
Approach life's setting sun;
They sadly see their life-long friends
Departing one by one.
Their daydreams gone, their castles wrecked,
With longing hearts they crave
To be with those who slumber 'neath
The shadow of the grave.

This dread, dread shadow of the grave,
It hovers over all—
The humble cottar in his cot,
The monarch in his hall;
And young and old, the rich, the poor,
The master and the slave,
Must pass away when on them falls
The shadow of the grave.

AULD SCOTLAND'S HEATHERBELL

Fair France may boast her lovely vine
An' Spain her orange tree,
An' bright Ceylon her floo'ry groves,
But what are they tae me?
I'd raither roam the heathy hills,
An' view the mossy dells,
Where brown and Adam sleep aneath
Auld Scotland's heatherbells.

Or climb Cairntable's rugged breast,
Tae pree the caller air,
Sweet-scented wi' the heather's bloom,
That decks the Sanquhar Muir;
Or list the plover's mournfu' notes
Beside the Boilin' Well,
Which mirrors on its crystal face
Auld Scotland's heatherbell.

My muirlan' hame has ither floo'ers
That show a lovely bloom—
The gowan an' the primrose sweet,
Likewise the gowden broom,
But though I love tae view them a',
They canna weave the spell
That stirs my hert whene'er I see
Auld Scotland's heatherbell.

For memories sweet an' sad arise,
An' dim my een wi' tears,
For 'mang these lovely mountain floo'ers
I spent my boyhood years.
A laughin', happy, careless boy,
I roamed through Wellwood's dells,
Whaur laverocks chant their sweet love notes
Abune the heatherbells.

Roun' Coutburn Raw, an' auld Tar Kilns,
Fu' often I hae played,
An' ranted ower the quarry knowes,
An' dookit in the Lade,
Till doon Wardlaw's dark heathy slopes;
The gloamin' shadows fell;
I hirpled hame, by bannet decked
Wi' Scotland's heatherbe

AUL-S-BURN GLEN

When weary an' vexed wi' the problems of life,
Its selfishness, envy, deception, and strife,
I hie me away from the dwellings of men
To mingle with Nature in Aul-s-burn glen.

Alone in the woodland so restful and still,
Communing with Nature I wander at will;
Then nerve-racking worry steals furtive away
Like darkness of night at the dawning of day.

The flowers of the forest adorning the grass
Accord me a welcome as onward I pass,
And Nature, rejoicing, presents to my view
Great drifts of wood-sorrel and hyacinths blue.

Inhaling their fragrance I wander along,
My soul in a rapture, enthralled with the song
Of birds in the woodland, carolling an ode
Of glad adoration to Nature and God.

The murmur of insects, the hum of the bees,
The pine-scented zephyrs caressing the trees,
The croon of the streamlet from eddy and fall—
My soul's best emotions respond to them all.

Delectable valley, 'tis pleasant and sweet
To walk with my God in its leafy retreat,
And marvel at Nature's immaculate life,
Untainted with envy, deception, and strife.

No vile evil passions, nor slander is near,
But, like a saint's anthem, there falls on my ear
The love-laden sound of the wood-pigeon's call,
And the Spirit of Peace broods gently o'er all.

Where primroses bloom round a moss-covered stile,
In rapt contemplation I linger awhile,
And then in the gloaming I turn me again
From the temple of God to the dwellings of men.

LEESHAW LEA (Continued)

When gentle Spring the landscape weaves,
Wi' blossom buds an' burstin' leaves,
An' on the mornin' air is borne
The fragrance o' the blossomed thorn,
Then heaven alone compares wi' thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

On throbbin' wings the lark on high
Pours forth its matchless melody,
From pinewood copse an' hedgerow thorn
The woodlan' choir salutes the morn.
Wi' music sweet tae God an' thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

By Sunnyside an' Birkley there
The Ponesk joins the infant Ayr,
'Tween fragrant drifts o' meadowsweet
The sister waters murmurin' meet,
Then through thy meads flow tae the sea,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

There Eshieburn's dark mossy rill
Comes joukin' tae the auld Waulkmill,
An' ripplin' past its roofless wa's,
Deep ower a linn the burnie fa's,
An' gi'es an added charm tae thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, Sweet Leeshaw lea.

Should fate decree that I may roam
Far, far frae thee across the foam,
As lang as life hauds on tae burn,
My yearnin' soul will oft return
On mem'ry's wings, tae bide wi' thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

How good it is tae walk abroad
An' view the wondrous works o' God,
An' know that Nature's vast design
Is guided by a God divine,
Who, by His work, created thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

AULD SCOTLAND'S HEATHERBELL (Continued)

An' doon yon glen whaur Garpel flows,
Saft singin' tae the sea,
Fu' often I hae trysted wi'
A lassie dear tae me.
Then roun' each throbbin' heart an' brain
Love wove his magic spell,
An' busked his love-tipped arrows wi'
Auld Scotland's heatherbell.

But, ah! thae days are a' awa',
Gane never tae return;
Since then I've learned, like Scotland's bard,
That man was made to murn.
Yet, 'mid the cankerin' cares o' life,
My memory fondly dwells
On the happy, happy days I spent
Amang the heatherbells.

A FARE-YE-WEEL

What strange emotions stir the heart,
And dim the anguished eye,
When loving friends are forced to part
And breathe a last good-bye.
We never know, when friends are near,
The pangs a heart can feel,
Or sound the weary depths of woe
Breathed in a fare-ye-weel.

An aching grief enshrouds the heart,
And rends it to the core,
When kindred souls are rent apart
To met on earth no more.
With careless mien, when friends are near,
Our love we may conceal,
But, oh, it gushes with the tear
That weeps a fare-ye-weel.

The heaving breast, the tear-dimmed eye,
Bespeak the love sincere,
For, when we test affection's tie,
The strongest proof's a tear.
'Tis then we know our genuine friends,
And know their love is real,
When love and grief together blend
And weep a fare-ye-weel.

A FARE-YE-WEEL (Continued)

But from the grief a parting gives
A subtle sweetness flows
That long in mournful memory lives,
Like fragrance in the rose.
'Tis sweet to know we'll meet again
'Way in the Land-o-leal,
No more to feel the weary pain
Caused by a last fare-ye-weel.

EFFIE'S SPOOT

Some local bards may woo the muse,
An' soar tae heichts sublime;
I only mak' auld Effie's Spoot
The subject o' my rhyme—
A spoot that has for ages been
The clachan's joy an' pride,
For frae its ancient iron pipe
The purest waters glide.

An' weel-a-wat auld Effie's Spoot,
Will aye be dear tae me,
For by the Toll an' auld Spoot Raw
I played when I wis wee,
An' in auld Effie's gushin' Spoot
We a' wid gether roon',
An' drink deep draughts o' Adam's wine
Frae oot oor bonnet croon.

But roon' that ancient flowin' pipe
A sweeter memory clings—
The memory o' my wootin' days
That still deep pleasures brings.
There, in the gloamin' wi' her stoups,
A winsome lassie came,
An' prood wis I whan I got leave
Her stoups tae cairry hame.

Noo, when I pass that dear auld Spoot,
I think it rather queer
That it should aye remain the same
Its water rin as clear
While childhood, youth, and manhood's prime,
Should swiftly pass away,
For noo beside auld Effie's Spoot,
My children's children play.

A DAY'S FISHIN' (Continued)

"Guid God," says he, "I'm stranded shair
A lang six miles frae onywhere."
But haud yer wheesht, I'm prood tae say't,
A Scotsman's no' sae easy bate;
Ane o' the breed, auld Wull was game,
So on yae leg he airted hame.
Wull's struggle hame's a woefu' tale,
So ower the scene I'll draw a veil,
But what he tholed gaun thro' the moss
Should mak' him claim Victoria's Cross;
An' sair forfochan, dead-beat, lame,
Thus on aye leg Wull managed hame.
Noo reader, when this rhyme is read,
A lesson there you'll find indeed,
The moral it contains is plain—
Nae folk should roam the hills their lane;
Like Wull, they micht be stranded shair
A lang six miles frae onywhere.
Noo Wullie has nae wish for fame,
Nor nae athletic records claim,
But fient a yin wad daur tae cope
An' beat him in a sax miles hop.

* * * * *

LEESHAW LEA

(An Ode)

When auld King Sol soars in the east,
An' glints alang Cairntable's breist,
On Sabbath mornin's calm an' still,
When mists hang low on Hareshaw Hill,
I airt my mornin' stroll tae thee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

Tae roam alang they benty knowes,
Thy daisied fields an' crannied howes,
Where stately ferns their fronds unfold,
An' primrose flo'ers like draps o' gold
Enthral my soul wi' ecstasee,
Sweet Leeshaw lea, sweet Leeshaw lea.

A DAY'S FISHIN', AN' WHAT CAM' O'T

To Dr Cameron, who so gently and skilfully treated Wull's injured knee,
this rhyme is respectfully dedicated.

Bauld Wullie Gibb, a thrawn auld tyke,
Was on hauf time, a' thro' the strike,
An' deaf tae a' his wife wad say,
Resolved some fishin' he wad hae.
So worms an' grubs he gethered in
A wee roun' Colman's mustard tin,
Then wi' his basket, rod, an' purn,
He airted doon Duneaton Burn.
The road was lang, the hills were heich,
But Wull ne'er thocht the journey dreich;
Hoyed on by sweet anticipation,
He reached at length his destination.
Wat tae the knees wi' mornin' dew,
Wull plied his rod, the fish were few;
He tried the grub, he tried the mauk,
An' bramble worms they wad not tak'.
A nibble noo an' whiles a pook,
But feint a fish could Wullie hook,
An' clean fed up, he muttered "fegs—
The blasted fish want ham an' eggs."
So Wull resolved tae tak' his ease,
An' hae a snack o' breid an' cheese;
Ere he began, he bared his heid,
An' thenkit God for health and breid;
An' there among the moorlan' sods,
Wull dined on food fit for the gods.
When frae a spring a drink he'd ta'en,
He made a stert tae fish agane.
Tho' up in years, still gey an' teuch,
He made a race tae loup a sheuch,
But ere that fatefu' loup was ta'en,
His fit caught on a shoogley stane.
This gied puir Wull an' unco whummle,
An' sent him sprauchlin' wi' a rummle,
An' tryin' hard tae kep his fa',
He gied his knee a screivin' thraw.
When he had gethered pith tae rise,
His knee had swalled tae twice its size,
An' when he tried tae walk he foun'
He couldna rest it on the groun',

THE BONNIE LASS O' WELLWOOD HA'

When auld King Sol sinks in the west,
An' gloamin' gray steals doon the hills,
When wee birds coorie in their nests,
An' dew on every leaf distils,
Wi' lichtsme hert my hame I lea',
An' hie me ower tae Birkenshaw,
Tae meet aneath the trystin' tree
The bonnie lass o' Wellwood Ha'.

By Wellwood's stately mansion fair
Ayr's crystal waters saftly croon;
The pine woods scent the gloamin' air,
An' love is breathed in every soun'.
The wakin' moths in circles play,
The roostin' pheasants loodly ca';
A' nature seems to homage pay
The bonnie lass o' Wellwood Ha'.

Her braided hair a gowden sheen,
Her dimpled cheeks wi' roses vie,
An', bricht wi' love, her bonnie een
Ootshine the starnies in the sky.
Wi' form as lithsome as the deer,
An' bosom white as driven snaw,
There's no' another maid can peer
The bonnie lass o' Wellwood Ha'.

Ae 'oor o' bliss an' we maun pairt,
When love an' longin' maks me fain
Tae clasp the lassie tae ma hert,
An' fondly ca' her a' ma ain;
An' vow tae her a solemn aith,
Whate'er may hap, or ill's befa',
Tae cherish, love, an' gaird frae skaith
The bonnie lass o' Wellwood Ha'.

THE OUTCAST

Borne down with care, and grief oppressed,
Without a home or place of rest,
 And tossed at fortune's will,
With blighted hopes, ambition gone,
Friendless, forsaken, and alone,
 Along life's dreary hill.

Enthralled by vice, and passion's slave,
He marches onward to the grave,
 In dark despair and gloom;
While ghastly phantoms of the past
Shriek round him like a wailing blast
 Of everlasting doom.

Stung with regrets and chances lost,
While might-have-beens, like phantom ghosts,
 Go taunting on before;
Lashed by remorse, he hastens on,
While dying hopes around him moan
 Like breakers on the shore.

His journey past, and in the grave,
And, plunged in Lethe's murky wave,
 Will then his woe be o'er?
Or will the pangs that rend his soul
Torment for aye till ages roll,
 And time will be no more.

Ah! no; for mercy, like a star,
Shines softly downward from afar,
 And whispers through the gloom:
"Come, leave behind the weary past,
And rest in joy and peace at last,
 In life beyond the tomb."

EPISTLE TO DAVID L. MURDOCH

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

My gifted an' respected frien',
I vowed a solemn vow estreen,
That ere the mornin's sun wad shine
I'd post ye on a "just a line"
Tae thank ye, and tae highly praise
Your lyric gem—"Blawearie Braes."
So in beside the ingleneuk,
Wi' fountain pen' an' jottin' book,
I steek't my een an' clawed my heid,
An' wunnert hoo I wad proceed,
When a' at ance says I, here goes,
I'll mak' it rhyme instead o' prose.
So if my muse wad prompt me till
I sprauchle up Parnassus' hill,
An' should the hizzie play nae pranks,
In limpin' rhyme I'll voice my thanks
Tae you, wha sent oot ower the sea
Your Doric lilt inscribed tae me—
It is, I'm pleased an' prood tae state,
An' honour I appreciate.
But though braid seas atween us lie,
The mystic waves of po-e-sy
Can e'en the widest ocean span
An' link the thochts o' man an' man.
Then, gifted frien', your thochts an' mine
Aroun' Blawearie Braes entwine,
Twae he'rts attuned tae Nature's lyre,
Twae minds endowed wi' hot desire,
A mutual wish, that fans the flame
Tae woo in rhyme oor boyhood's hame.
Then let oor thochts thegither rove
Tae Tibbie's Brig an' Ferny Grove,
The Wee Blue To'er, the Garpel Glen,
The Engine Raw an' Nummer Ten,
An' ramble ower the bings o' blaes
That lie alang Blawearie's Braes.
And let oor thochts, still side by side,
Roam ower the moorlan' far an' wide—
Roun' Sanquhar Brig, alang the Lade,
Where we in boyhood often played,
The Boilin' Well, the Sanquhar Mair,
The Quarry Knowes abune the Square,
An' let them linger as they will
At Coutburn Raw an' roun' Springhill,
An' last an' best we'll bid them turn
Tae Midhoose an' tae Linkieburn;
An' thus, in thochts, renew the joys,
We felt when we were barefit boys.
What though by Nature's stern behest
Oor waning lives draw near the West,
As lang's a spark o' Nature's fire
Bestir oor souls wi' hot desire,
As lang's the muse inspires the flame,
We'll woo in rhyme oor boyhood's hame

MY AULD TOON (Continued)

My auld streams, my auld streams,
That 'mang gray boulders rowe,
An' murmur brawlin' doon the glens
Where heath an' breckins growe;
Nae words o' mine can hauf express
The love I hae for thee;
My auld streams, my auld streams,
Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld kirk, my auld kirk,
Wi' time-worn architaves,
Ye stan' a gray an' rugged pile
Amid the hallowed graves
O' generations deid an' gane
Wha worshipped God in thee;
My auld kirk, my auld kirk,
Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld skuil, my auld skuil,
That stan's ayont the street,
Aye when I view yer aged wa's
My een wi' tears turn weat;
An' me'mries o' my boyhood days
Come driftin' back tae me;
My auld skuil, my auld skuil,
Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

The auld pits, the auld pits,
Oor faithers wrocht lang syne—
The Stottencleugh an' Maidenbank,
Airdsgreen an' Leeshaw mine;
Muirkirk was then a thrivin' place,
Wi' routh o' wark for a',
But, noo, alas, my auld toon,
Tae days are a' awa'.

The auld warks, the auld warks,
Are sairly crippled noo,
The rollin' mill an' puddlin' forge
Hae vanished frae the view;
An' rumour says the furnaces
May cease ere lang tae blaw;
My auld toon, my auld toon,
Ye're totterin' tae a fa'.

It's comin' then, it's comin' then,
An' some that's born may see't—
The very grass an' nettles will
Be growin' on the street;
An' future tourists passin' by
Will halt an' view the scene
An' then remark—"This place is where
A village ance has been."

A DREAM

I dreamed ae nicht o' a queer auld toon,
Where rain fa's up when it'll no' fa' doon,
Where ugly dirt-heaps the landscape mar,
An' the river rins afttimes wi' tar.

An' the "pads" are laid wi' loose asphalt,
That wears folks' buits quick tae the welt;
An' cobblers laugh wi' fiendish glee,
The rotten asphalt an' buits tae see.

An' in my dream 'twas quite a treat
Tae see the folk walk on the street;
Each wore that scowl which aye adorns
The face o' man wha's fashed wi' corns.

An' some, wha'd shauchly, tender feet,
Preferred tae walk on the central street,
Tae skip alang wi' the splendid ease
That the pilgrim felt wha boiled his peas.

That queer auld toon, wi' its queer street,
Sported some queer things hard tae beat,
But queerest o' a', let me remark—
The public street was the Public Park.

In that public park lay tramps asleep,
An' youngsters played on a fr=eecoup heap
That sported a scent—it cut your breath,
An' meant to the bairns disease an' death.

An' in my dream things seemed tae droll;
Each public seat was a window sole,
Whaur Weary Willies, frae morn till dark,
Held up hoose-ens in that Public Park.

But the saddest things I dreamt I saw
Was "loonies" following a wee white ba',
Then swung a club for a' their worth,
An' shifted (a fact) some yairds o' turf.

Noo, I cud continue on this theme,
On the queer, queer things seen in my dream,
But space is scant—I've said enough,
So I sign mysel'—Yours,

HIS BRAW NEW CORDUROYS

If you should chance tae meet a chap
Wi' wild an' vacant stare,
His shouthers keekin' over his heid,
An' premature grey hair;
Wha talks an' mutters tae himsel,
Wi' madness in his e'e,
Ye may be shair that nervous wreck's
A railway employee.

Wi' "please explain," an' tortured wi'
Inspectors on his track,
Wha dangle aye afore his een
The Order o' the Sack;
While paltry fauts an' stiff reports
His tortured soul annoys,
He's happy only when he gets
His braw new corduroys.

Hame wi' his parcel, tied wi' string,
A gey prood man he goes,
But when he lays that parcel oot
His guidwife hauds her nose,
An' tho' a donsie, douce guidwife,
That naething much annoys,
Cries "Michty me, they smell alood,
Yer braw new corduroys."

So for a week she steeps them in
A tub o' saippy lees,
Then hings them on the washin' line
Tae flutter in the breeze;
But tho' Lifebouy Carbolic Saip
The fever germ destroys,
It fails tae shift the flavour o'
His braw new corduroys.

On Monday morn the Wreck decides
His braw new claes tae don;
Sae when his guidwife lays them oot,
He tries the troosers on;

THE AULD FOLK

The auld folk, the auld folk,
God-fearin', douse, an' kin',
Wha dwelt within oor auld toon
In happy auld lang syne;
Weel-leevin', honest, auld folk
Wi' he'rts sae leal an' true,
The auld folk, the auld folk—
There's nae folk like them noo.

The auld folk, the auld folk—
What tho' their gear was sma',
Wi' frugal care an' honest toil
They kept the wolf awa',
An' lippeden aye tae Providence
Tae help them wi' their load.
The auld folk, the auld folk,
A helpin' haun' wad gie.

The auld folk, the auld folk,
God-fearin' folk were they,
Each nicht they knelt tae God in prayer,
An' kept the Sabbath day.
They claimed it as a day o' rest
For man an' beast as weel.
The auld folk, the auld folk,
Their fear o' God was real.

The auld folk, the auld folk,
Are dwin'lin' fast awa',
Wha dwelt within oor ain toon
'Tween Midhoose an' Spoot Raw.
An' young folk fit tae fill their shune
Are far atween an' few,
The auld folk, the auld folk,
Ther'es nae folk like them noo.

MY AULD TOON

My auld toon, my auld toon,
Though naether big nor braw—
Wi' only ae lang stragglin' street,
An' here an' there a raw;
What though a stranger views ye wi'
Disfavour in his e'e?
My auld toon, my auld toon,
Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

My auld hills, my auld hills,
Cairntable an' Wardlaw,
What though yer taps are bleak an' bare,
An' often clad wi' snaw?
The love I bear my native lan'
Is lavished a' on thee;
My auld hills, my auld hills,
Ye're a' the worl' tae me.

THE RED RAW (Continued)

An' a' my veesions o' the past
I saw nae langer there,
O where, O whither had they gane?
An echo answered—"Where?"

In bygane days oor ancient toon
Some orra raws could claim,
That lang hae been in ruins laid,
Kent only noo by name—
The auld Stair Raw, the Cottage Raw,
That stud fornent Airdsmill,
The Wellwood Raw, the Peesweep Raw,
The Coutburn at Springhill.

The twa Forge Raws, the Office Close,
The Castle near the Square,
The Heigh Weighs an' the Catchieburn,
High up on Midhoose muir,
An' if my memory guides me richt,
The doyen o' them a'
Was aye—the subject o' my rhyme—
The hamely wee Red Raw.

Oh! what a power is wielded by
That squeeef they ca' Decay;
The boundless cosmic Universe
Surrenders tae its sway.
It seals the fate o' a' the stars
That nichtly roun' us burn;
The Earth, the Planets, an' the Moon,
It smites them as they turn.

An' ev'ry thing that God has placed
On earth or in the sea,
Nae maitter what or where they are,
Maun' yield tae its decree;
An' e'en yon countless suns that form
The far-flung Milky Way,
Contain within their whirlin' orbs
The microbes o' Decay.

Then if the mighty works o' God
Time's inroads canna stan',
We canna claim a lang life for
The puny works o' man;
So if the subject o' my rhyme
Obeyes the Natural Law,
'Twill sune be a' in ruins laid,
An' cease tae be a raw.

HIS BRAW NEW CORDUROYS (Continued)

For width an' length o' leg they look
As tippy as ye please,
But, gosh, the sate and waist wad fit
An elephant wi' ease.

Wi' sinkin' hert an' risin' gorge
He then the waistcoat tries,
'Twad scarce gae roon ' a nine-inch pipe,
An' far ower short a size;
An' when the wife cries "pu' it doon,"
He blusters an' he hauls,
Wi' muttered curse, but still that vest
Up tae his oxter crawls.

The jaicket next—but ower the scene
I fain wad draw a veil,
The swear-words bellowed by the Wreck
Wad mak' a bleck turn pale.
Tho' buttoned ticht, slow doon his back
His braw new jaicket strals,
An' only ends its journey when
It flaps against his heels.

Sae when he sallies forth tae wark,
He looks a perfecy guy;
The only thing that fits him are
His collar an' his tie.
An' should he chance tae pass a crood
O' bad infernal boys,
They yell "See what the win' blew in,
A' dressed in corduroys.

"An' for a year the nervous Wreck,
In sunshine an' in storm,
Is ordered by the powers that be
To wear that uniform.
While wounded pride, an' crushed consate,
His peace o' mind destroy,
He blanks the day, an' blanks the oor,
He donned thae corduroys.

FORTY YEARS AGO

Auld age is creepin' on us, John,
Wha ance were young an' hale;
That thief, ca'd time, has bleach'd oor powws,
An' made us auld an frail.
Then come wi' me, my lifelang frien',
An let us sit below
This aiken tree we used tae clim'
Lang forty years ago.

We'll hae a crack on auld langsyne,
An' bring tae min' the days
When, freed frae schuil, twa lauchin' boys,
We roamed the village braes,
Whaur through the air, at boyish games,
Oor joyous lauchter rung;
Your favourite was the roonders, John,
An' mine wis Geordie Bung.

An' in the lang vacation days,
The time they closed the schuil,
We guddled in the Soormulk Burn,
An' dooked in Sheddan's Puil.
Then in the water we for fun
Each ither's claes wid throw;
That's something like the pranks we played
Lang forty years ago.

When we gaed crawlin' hame at een,
In wat an' draigled claes,
Wi' wearit, sunburned, hackit legs,
An' grasscuts on oor taes,
Oor faithers then produced their taws,
An' gied us "what for no,"
Nae "spare the rod an' spoil the bairn"
Lang forty years ago.

Oh John, it maks me young agane—
Ma auld hert's in a lowe—
When I reca' the fechts we had
Alang the Comp'ny's Knowe;
In battles wi' the Comp'ny's Schuil,
Oor weapons balls o' snow,
Ye min' we always won the day
Lang forty years ago.

Rab Moffat wis oor captain then—
A brave an' sturdy tyke,
The stalwart Taylors frae Houmheid,
The boys frae Greenockdyke,

THE RED RAW

The furnace reek, in heavy clouds,
Hung low abune the toon;
The classic Ayr 'tween slaggy scaurs,
Gaed murm'ring slowly doon;
The noisy rook at Kaimshill piped
Its loud familiar caw,
Ae evenin' as I wan'er'd forth
Tae view the wee Red Raw.

An' what a picture met my view—
My he'rt turned seeck an' wae;
I foun' that weel aul-farrant raw
In ruins an' decay—
Its geyvals rent, its riggin's gane,
Its lums a' on the fa';
Auld Time had set his daith-mark on
The hamely wee Red Raw.

A' ower the thresholds o' its doors
Rank weeds an' nettles grew;
Its latchless doors stuid open wide
Tae every win' that blew;
Its lang-deserted ingle-neuks
Were crumblin' fast awa';
Grim ruin held high revelry
Within the wee Red Raw.

As frae my een I brushed awa'
Some hot unbidden tears,
My mem'ry winged a flichterin' flicht
'Way doon the by-gane years,
Till saftly ower my senses stole
A dream o' auld lang syne,
An' mental veesions o' the past
Cam' croodin' in my min'.

An' auld-time folk, lang deid an' gane,
Again were dwellin' there,
An' aul-time voices, lang, lang stilled,
Cam' floatin' on the air;
Its but an' ben, its ingle neuks,
Again were bien an' braw,
An' aul'-time bairnies romped an' played
Alang the wee Red Raw.

A risin' win' sighed through the ruifs
Wi' eerie soogh an' moan;
Some loosened tiles cam' tumblin' doon,
An' lo, my dream was gone;

EPISTLE TAE JOHN WHYTE (Continued)

An' Fancy woo'd us on her breast.
While Fame's bright star before us shone,
An' smilin' Hope decoyed us on,
The while Ambition an' Desire
Coursed in oor veins like liquid fire.
'Twas then auld Time, wi' sauntrin' gait,
Convoyed us on tae man's estate;
But och-on-on, alas alack,
There cam' a day when we looked back,
An' lookin' back, what did we find
'Way doon the years we'd left behind?
Oor day-dreams nil, Ambitions gone,
An' Fame's bricht star—ochone, ochone,
An' fallen, fallen frae the air
The castles we constructed there;
An' roun' them danced a waefu' host
O' vain regrets an' chances lost
Led by a corps o' grinin' fien's—
Oor blighted hopes an' nicht-hae-beens;
An' a' we saw this fact expressed—
Life wis a failure at its best.
Aye, John, the saddest hour in life
(E'en tho' its crammed wi' sturt an' strife)
Is when aul' age gets on oor track
An' sen's oor memories harkin' back.
'Tis then aul' Time kicks up her heels,
Pulls on the steam, and oils his wheels,
An' as a weel-trained racin' steed
When at the straught puts on mair speed,
Sae you an' I, wi' muckle faught,
At lang an' length hae reached the straught,
An' noo we're toddlin' doon the brae,
Approachin' fast the shadowy grey.
Tae lay oor banes in Mither Earth—
John, daith's as natural as a birth,
An' thus I sign mysel' to-night—
Frae aul' Tam Floyd tae yaul' John Whyte.

FORTY YEARS AGO (Continued)

The swanky Hyslops frae Linnburn,
The Shearers frae the Ha',
An' Leeshaw Jock, an' Mansfield Tam,
The jolliest o' them a';
The Hendersons frae Aishyburn,
Heigh Wellwood's three McMins,
The Maider chiels frae Aitkenclough,
Whaur lanely Greenock rins;
An' John McMichael frae the Toll,
A studious boy indeed;
Then ane we loved tae ca' oor chum—
James Pearson frae Crafterheid;
The Johnstones frae the Tilewark tae,
The Brysons frae Dalfram,
The Davidsons frae Garronhill—
The pawky Wull an' Tam,
An' Soutar Smith's twa manly sons,
The genial Jim an' Joe;
Were a' oor trusty schuilmates then,
Lang forty years ago.
An' owre there in the Kirkyaird, John,
Aneath the firtrees' shade,
Some trusty comrades we had then
Hae lang been silent laid,
Whaur ower their graves the zephyrs croon
Wi' music saft an' low—
A requiem tae the joys they had
Lang forty years ago.
Oh, when I think on auld langsyne,
My hert is wrung wi' pain;
I'm wae tae think oor boyhood days
Will never come agane.
But what's the use o' murnin', John,
An' frettin' ower the past,
When weel we ken, by Nature's law,
Oor boyhood canna last.
For we maun rise tae manhood's prime,
An' bear the world's load,
An' then gang slippin' doon the brae
Tae sleep aneath the sod.
But if we love oor Maker, John,
Frae whom a' blessin's flow,
We'll rise tae pleasures sweeter far
Than forty years ago.

THE JAM FUND

The Editor sat in his office chair,
An' scartit his achin' heid;
His min' wis troubled, his hert wis sad,
For siller wis scarce, an' times were bad,
An' he wis famished indeed.

The Editor rose frae his office chair,
An' his pantry searched within,
The heel o' a loaf wis a' he got,
Some stale sma'breid, an' an empty pot
That jeelie had ance been in.

The Editor glared at the empty pot,
An' mum'led a great big "D———,"
An' mournfully growled—"This tak's the leek,
That we, the Ed. o' the Weekly Squeak,
Get never a taste o' jam;

Tae edit an issue oor weekly sheet
We struggle, an' sweat, an' toil,
Yet a' we reap is worry an' care,
While hert, an' brain, an' een get sair,
Wi' burnin' the midnight oil."

The famished Editor resumed his chair,
An scartit his heid agane,
When, a' at ance, he uttered a shout,
An' wildly wobbled his arms about,
Then reached for his fountain pen.

As he brandished his inky fist, an' gied
His desk a terrible slam,
He cried—"Eureka! I see't! I see't!
I'll float a shilling subscription sheet,
An' gether a fund for jam;

An' we carena' whether oor readers a'
Should grum'le, or sneer, or grin,
For if they should, they've a horse's cheek;
They get free gratis the weekly Squeak,
Wi' a calendar thrown in."

The Editor's plan wis guid, you'll guess,
If you his visage exam.;
A No. 12 smile has settled there,
An' it's said he needs a wider chair
Wi' feastin' on breid an' jam.

EPISTLE TAE JOHN WHYTE, ENTRYHEID

My honest, much respeckit frien',
For near a twalmonth I hae been
Intendin' aye tae write a screed
An' sen' it on tae Entryheid;
But ye'll forgie me when I state
My muse has gane a waefu' gait.
Aye when I tried tae woo her skill
She skelpit up Pernassus Hill,
Sae mountin' on Pegassus' back
I helter-skeltered on her track,
But wi' a fling an' hotchin-hitch
He left me sprauchlin' in a ditch.
Sae, scunnert wi' the fickle maid,
I've tried my haun' without her aid,
An' sen' ye on this queer hotch-potch
O' limpin' rhyme an' hybrid Scotch.
It mak's me think, an' after sigh
Tae see the years gae slippin' by,
For at oor ages, John, ye see,
A year means much tae you an' me,
An' if God spares us langer yet
The years will aye the shorter get,
An' aye as ane gangs ower the heid
The next will come wi' greater speed,
Until we toddle doon the brae
An' pass within the shadowy grey
Tae lay oor banes in Mither Earth—
John, daith's as natural as a birth.
I weel hae min' when we were boys
Oor min's were tuned tae boyish ploys,
An' a' oor thochts were bent on play,
An' life was ae lang simmer day.
But lo, anon! new-born desires
Stirred in oor briests like hidden fires
An' made us yearn for manlier things—
Then Time gaed by on leaved wings,
Fain, fain tae grasp what lay before
An' what the futute held in store,
Bricht day-dreams a' oor thochts caressed,

A RHYME (Continued)

An' daimont spouters roun' the brod
Acclaim him as a demigod
 Far far abune the human;
That a' the talents frae abune
Were plantit somewhere near the Dune
 An' grew an' Ayrshire plooman.

But wheesht! Should Rabbie's shade be near
An' a' the glorifin' hear
 'Twad mak him glower an' wunner,
An' say—"When I was here on earth
They pey'd sma' tribute tae my worth,
 Yer talk's a perfect scunner."

For when misfortunes great an' sma'
Had sent him reeling tae the wa'—
 John Barleycorn his maister—
The guid an' godly stuid aluif
An' christened him a hair-brained cuif—
 A lustfu' drucken waster.

Though wayward Rab rots in the grun'
His genius, like a noon-day sun,
 Still shines ower a' below it;
His matchless language o' the soul
Has placed him first on Nature's roll
 An' crowned him Scotland's poet.

I hear ye say this ramblin' rhyme
Is no' what ane wad ca' sublime,
 It micht hae been sublimer;
But ilka rose conceals a thorn—
Alas! I'm no a poet born,
 But jist an ord'nar' rhymer.

MEMORIES

When night brings relief from the labours that tire,
In sorrow and sadness I sit by the fire,
And, gazing steadfast in the embers' red glow,
Recall cherished memories of long long ago.

The firelight it flickers and flares through the gloom,
Creating weird shadows that creep round the room,
And the spirits of lost ones seem hovering near,
While voices long silent breathe low in my ear.

Through regions of fancy my spirit takes flight,
On the pinions of thought—on, on through the night;
Urged on by affection, it speeds on its way
To a green hallowed grave on the breast of a brae.

To that green hallowed spot as my spirit draws nigh
A white-robed immortal comes down from on high
To hold a communion no stranger can share;
The why and the wherefore—my mother lies there.

Strange world of fancy, to me, oh, how sweet,
Where mother's bright spirit and mine still can meet
In a bond of affection dread death cannot part;
Though gone from my presence she lives in my heart.

And many a sorrow and grief has been mine
Since she kissed and caressed me in happy langsyne,
Till, fain to be with her, for death I have sighed—
To pass through this valley—but that was denied.

In those moments of sadness and weary unrest
I long for the love of my lost mother's breast,
And the gladness and comfort her fond presence gave
Ere she passed from beside me away to the grave.

But why should I sorrow; my loss was her gain,
For long, long she languished in sickness and pain,
Till Christ in his love bore her spirit on high
To a mansion of rest in the realms of the sky.

MUIRKIRK

When God made oor planet, an' said it was guid,
There still was some glauber He hadna got rid;
A lang while He pondered, then said wi' a smirk—
"I'll mak' a bit village, an' ca' it Muirkirk."

He steered up the glauber, an' made a lang street,
Then twa or three sidewings tae mak' it complete;
But finding He still had some glauber tae spare,
He added the Ironworks and Linkieburn Square.

He then took the village an' plankit it doon
In midst o' wild muirlan's, cauld, dreary, an' broon,
Whaur reigns siccan winters, an' blashy win's blaw,
An' when it's no' rainin' there's share tae be snaw.

When strangers and tourists come cyclin' its way,
They shake an' they shiver, they growl, an' they say
"Fag en' o' creation, a beastly auld hole—
The warst place in Scotland, a second North Pole."

An' if they should cycle along its main street,
A mixture o' mankind they're shair for tae meet—
Scotch, English, an' Irish, an' "Taffies" frae Wales,
An' apes wha wear trousers tae hide up their tails.

An' if it should happen tae be pey nicht,
An' a' the "pub's" skailin', they'll see a sad sicht
O' frail genus homus, hoo low he can sink,
Enslaved by his passions—a victim tae drink.

An' then for impidence, bad mainners, and cheek,
The bairns o' the village can fair tak' the leek;
For ere they can toddle or taught for tae spell,
Can use siccan language, 'twad mak' yer een stell.

Then shairly, O shairly, ther's something amiss,
When fate mak's me leave in a village like this,
Whaur it snaws, an' it thaws, it freezes, it rains;
God made it wi' glauber—it glauber remains.

A RHYME (Continued)

'Twas he wha charmed auld Coila's hills,
Her far-famed streams an' brawlin' rills,
Her daisies an' her thistles;
An' threw a sweet enchantment ower
Ilk fertile field an' woodlan' bower
Whaur lark or mavis whistles.

An' whiles the tantrums o' his muse
(He aye was best when on the boose)
Performed some merry dances.
He pulverised a Holy Fair,
An' syne immortalised a lair
O' tramps in Poosy Nancy's.

He made twa brigs gie ither cheek,
An' taught twa Ayrshire dugs tae speak,
Made angels o' the lassies,
An' whiles he tried some magic quirks—
He turned some students intae stirks,
An' some he made jackasses.

An' best o' a' among the lave—
He sent Tam Samson tae his grave
An' left his cronies grievin',
But when the swats had ta'en his heid
He resurrected Tam wi' speed,
An' cried—"Tam Samson's leevin'."

An' though his fankled race is run,
There's still a blast o' Januar' win'—
A storm o' man's designin'
It sweeps the earth frae pole tae pole
Wi' gusts o' wit an' blasts o' soul
Frae chiels on haggis dinin'.

Some drouthy chiels thae sprees atten'
(Though no' a word o' Burns they ken)
An' lood applaud the talker;
For Rab they dinna care a hair,
The only thing that brings them there
Is love for "Johnny Walker."

A RHYME

(POETRY IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL—Selden)

'Twas on a Thursday efternune
The boy frae Smith's cam' breengin' in
 An' waved an "Advertiser,"
An' cried—"O Tam, ye've gained a name
That planks ye on the roll o' Fame—
 That great immortaliser."

Guid life, quo I, that's something gran',
An' took the paper frae his haun',
 A' in a shake tae know it;
An' there an item grupt my e'e—
Ane "Coila Wallis" (wha is he?)
 Had christened me a poet.

Umph, umph, thinks I, this tak's the bun,
The chiel is shairly pokin' fun
 Or something else below it,
For weel he kens, I'll bet a preen,
The wide, wide gulf that lies between
 A rhymer an' a poet.

An' ornar' man, tae pass the time,
May try his haun at makin' rhyme,
 An' let the public know it;
Tae speak the language o' the soul
An' find your name on Nature's roll
 Ye must be born a poet.

Though no' a man like Bernard Shaw,
I whiles compose a rhyme or twa
 On scenes aroun' the clachan,
Tae memorise some lang-kent folk,
An' whiles I try a canty joke
 Tae set the folk a-lauchin.

But "Coila Wallis" may be sure
His wish is far ayont my poo'er—
 I wad be mair than human
If I should daur tae shove my spune
In what already has been dune
 By Rab, the Ayrshire plooman.

GARPEL'S BRAES

My memory often backward flies,
 An' muses on the bygone years,
Till scenes o' auld langsyne arise,
 An' joyous youth again appears;
But aye emotion ower them a'
 Sheds roon my hert its gowden rays
When frae their slumbers I reca'
 The days I spent on Garpel's braes.

For there the mavis on the spray
 Wi' music viles the simmer 'oors,
An' there the linnet tunes its lay
 'Mang shaggy heath an' muirlan' floo'rs;
An' there frae grey Cairntable's breast
 Rings clear the crested peesweep's cry,
An' there the lark soars ower its nest,
 An' pours its sang tae earth an' sky.

An' there the startled muirfowls rise,
 An' ower the heath their flight pursue,
An' there the plover's mournfu' cries
 Are mingled wi' the wild curlew's;
An' there the bee flits hummin' o'er
 The scented heath's wee noddin' bell,
That blooms sae fair on Garpel's shore,
 Where I hae roved, an' love sae well.

For there I spent my bairnhood 'oors
 Wi' ithier trusty playmates; there
I roved among the muirlan' floo'rs
 Withoot a grief, withoot a care.
For then my hert was like the free
 Heath-scented winds that whispered by
Tae woo the floo'ers in amorous glee;
 Noo echo answers wi' a sigh.

GARPEL BRAES (Continued)

An' there, a youth, I musin' strayed
Beside the Garpel's murmurin' stream;
Then life its brightest scenes protrayed
In mony a sweet, romantic dream;
An' there Ambition fondly wiled,
An' every wakin' thocht caressed,
While gently Hope my hert beguiled,
An' Fancy woo'd me on her breast.

But ah! thae happy 'oors are fled,
An' vanished are thae days for aye;
Far in a foreign land I tread—
A wanderin' exile far away.
Yet aft when sadly ponderin' here,
An' musin' on the long ago,
There fa's like music on my ear
The cadence o' the Garpel's flow.

An' though wild floo'ers aroon' me bloom
In gaudy colours fair tae see,
An' foreign birds wi' gorgeous plumes
Like meteors flash frae tree tae tree,
I weary sair for Garpel's howes,
Where thyme an' bluebells sweetly blaw,
An' yearn tae see the heathy knowes
'Tween Sanquhar Brig an' Coutburn Raw.

Then flow thee on, my muirlan' stream;
My hert shall ever beat for thee,
Though only in some musin' dream
Thy flowing stream I still may see,
An' roam among the muirlan' floo'ers,
An' live again thae happy 'oors
I spent alang thy ferny braes.

THE SPOOT RAW

Oor ancient aul' village contains a wee street
Where auld residenters ye gey aften meet;
An' near it a spoot dribbles oot frae a wa',
So in the braid Doric they ca'd it Spoot Raw.

The feck o' its biggins are wee but-an'-bens,
A daimont twae-storey an' some single en's,
Tho' laich o' the celin', aul'-fashioned an' sma',
Were big tae the buddies that built the Spoot Raw.

An' weel I hae min' o't, at Cattle Show time
The lairds o' the biggins whitewashed them wi' lime
An' pentit the windas, the door cheeks an' a'—
Nae place in the village cud match the Spoot Raw.

When musin' an' turnin' things ower in my min'
My thochts tak' a dauner 'way back tae langsyne,
An' steer up my mem'ry, 'tis then I reca'
Some auld residenters that dwalt in Spoot Raw.

A min' Elic Greenshields wha kept a wee shop,
An' big Mary Kirkland selt blackman and pop;
Mary Foster, Joe Grieve, Jean Mathieson tae,
An' quate Geordie Jack in the house at the brae.

An' when my auld mem'ry gets fairly agog
I min' Peggy Gibson an' douse Thomson Hogg,
Jean Scott an' Jock Gibson, an' syne Jean Strathearn
Were a' Spoot Raw worthies when I was a bairn.

For fell thrifty buddies like thae I hae named
Oot ower bonnie Scotland oor village was famed,
But Time wi' his snedder has wede them awa',
An' new generations abide in Spoot Raw.

Ashamed o' oor language—the grandest on earth,
The Gairden o' Eden nae doot saw its birth;
When sonsie Eve spak it it soondit sae sweet
It lifted puir Adam amaist aff his feet.

Baith glaikit an' donnert, the daft muckle cuif
When Eve wi' an aipple raxed oot on her luif
Said "Pree it, my laddie," egged on by the Deil,
Stegged oot "My braw lassie, I lo'e ye fu' weel."

At Babel's confusion God laid it aside
As ower guid a language tae gang wi' the tide,
Preserved through the ages, an' heirloom o' worth,
'Twas heired by the Scots folk—the saut o' the earth.

So when the name Bridge Street I happen tae hear
It clags on my senses an' jars on my ear;
Thae queer foreign jargons, away wi' them a';
I'll haud tae the Doric an' ca' it Spoot Raw.

NATURE'S GOD (Continued)

Wha's plaintive, "weet-weet" on the lea
Brocht hauntin' mem'ries back tae me
O' days lang lang gane by.

The odour o' the pine-wud trees,
The passin' hum o' hame-gaun bees,
Saft ower my senses stole;
Frae sunny meads an' shaded bowers
The fragrance o' the wee wild flowers
Ajoyed my very soul.

The lark, 'way up at Heaven's gate,
Sang sweetly ower its wee love-mate
Doon on the daisied sod;
The woodlan' choir encored the tune,
An' Nature breathed in ilka soun'
A hymn to Nature's God.

The Omnipresent Great First Cause
His love ordained that Nature's laws
Should guide and comfort man,
Wha's upright form and reasonin' brain
He made an' placed tae proodly reign
Lord o' Creation's plan.

I marvel then, O why should we
Be born in sin, in sin tae dee—
Oor souls condemned for aye
In quenchless fire till ages roll,
The solid earth burnt tae a scroll,
An' a' things pass away.

Oh, surely no', for plainly we
In a' we feel, an' hear, an' see,
A God o' love discern;
An' Reason whispers frae her throne—
"Gae, ponder on the Great Unknown;
There's something yet tae learn."

Breathes there a man wha e'er has said
There is nae God," an' boasts instead
The unbeliever's code;
Then let him roam an' view the trees,
The warblin' birds, the flower-clad leas,
An' worship Nature's God.

WA(U)R BREID

We crack aboot the Flander's mud,
An' Tommies' hardships there;
We crack aboot the aeroplanes—
Their murder frae the air;
We grum'le at the submarines;
Though bad eneuch indeed,
They couldna haud a caunel tae
The wife's war breid.

Wi' veesions o' an early daith
I tally up my sins,
For gosh, a' in my inward pairts
A rumlin' row begins
If I should chance at supper-time
Tae tak' an ornar feed
O' that ramsteerie staff o' life—
The wife's war breid.

A soor aye-need-the-doctor stuff,
It fills an' keeps me fu',
Wi' grupp'in' pains across my wame
That neartly mak' me spue,
An' generates carbonic gas
That buzzes in ma heid;
'Twad nearly sink a submarine—
The wife's war breid.

A barmy-heided doctor says
It's halesome an' its guid,
An' mak's ye fat an' sonsie like,
An' purifies your bluid;
I only wish the silly gowk
Wad gang and shave his heid,
An' warm it wi' a poultice o'
The wife's war breid.

I ask her whaur she buys her floure;
She winks the ither e'e
An' Says—"O Tam, my cauny man,
Ye ken as weel as me;"

WA(U)R BREID (Continued)

I ken she truces in a store,
But, losh, I seldom heed
O where the stuff is bocht that mak's
The wife's war breid.

I'm nearly at my reason's en',
I dunno what tae dae;
I daurna bile it tae the hens;
I daurna throw't away,
Or Sergeant Lyle wad very sune
Be on my track wi' speed,
An' nab me for wastin' o'
The wife's war breid.

So a' the breid that's left at nicht,
The wife puts by wi' care;
When next I sit it on my plate,
It sports an inch o' hair.
Gey seeck at hert, I ken for me
There's nae exempt indeed;
I'm bound tae eat that hairy beast—
The wife's war breid.

Tae help it ower, the wife she roasts
Some teuch cahootie cheese,
Or fries some bluid-an'-thunder ham
(The smell o't mak's me sneeze);
An' whiles I lay saut butter on,
An' thick wi' jeelie spreed—
They fail tae shift the flavour o'
Th wife's war breid.

I wish, I wish wi' a' my hert
This cruel war wis by,
An' that the lion an' the lamb
Will sune thegether lie,
Oor guns made into plooin' erns,
Oor pooder changed tae seed;
Then peace and plenty, haun in haun,
Will gie us better breid.

GARPEL BRAES (Continued)

My fancy often then did weave
A sweet romance o' mak-believe—
Methocht the world was a' mine own,
My mossy seat a golden throne,
The birds an' flo'oers my subjects then,
An' I was monarch o' the glen.

An' when the gloamin' 'oor drew nigh
An' Sol shone in the western sky,
Wi' sunburnt legs an' empty wame
By Coutburn Raw I skelpit hame
A wee afore the dark'nin' haze
Cam' creepin' doon on Garpel braes.

Gled days o' youth, hoo swift they sped,
An' truth an' sinless joy hae fled
An' left a secret langin' pain
That I micht be a boy again;
An' like the sundew roun' the spring
My soul an' mem'ry fondly cling
Tae when I roamed in duddie claes
A barefit boy on Garpel braes.

* * * *

NATURE'S GOD

Ae balmy, sun-kissed Sabbath Day,
When Flora's flowery mantle lay
On Wellwood's valley fair,
I rambled roun' by auld Bue To'oor,
In musin' mood tae spen' an' 'oor
Alang the banks o' Ayr.

The e'enin' sun ower Blackside-en'
Wi' Nature's matchless brush an' pen
Had limned wi' gold the skies,
An' painted stately Wellwood's towers,
Polwharnel's braes an' pine-wud bowers,
The tints o' Paradise.

High on Cairntable, grey an' stern,
The "In Memoriam" sojers; cairn
Was touched wi' gold, the while
A heaven-directed gowden ray
Streamed frae the glowin' Orb o' Day
An' kissed the hallowed pile.

The whaups' wild wail ayont the Swair
Cam' floatin' on the moorlan' air
Tae greet the pee-weet's cry,

GARPEL BRAES

INSCRIBED DAVID L. MURDOCH, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

In Wellwood's valley, lang an' deep,
Whaur gentle shepherds herd their sheep,
The brawlin' Garpel seaward rowes
'Mang ferny nooks an' heathy knowes;
Whaur' rowan trees wi' flo'oers like snaw
Hing droopin' ower each waterfa',
An' whortleberries, sweet an' blae,
Festoon the lichened boulders gray;
In crannied nooks and shaded bowers
The foxglove flaunts its gaudy flowers;
The wild tormentil's gowden e'e
An' fragrant yarrow lure the bee,
An' queen o' a', sweet an' sublime,
Appear great drifts o' crimson thyme.
The butterwort and sundew cling
Aroun' the babblin' caller spring
That jouks and murmurs doun between
Soft-cushioned moss o' palest green.
When Autumn an' her charms unfold,
An' tints the ferns wi' broon an' gold,
An' Sanquhar Mair is clad beneath
A purple robe o' fragrant heath,
'Tis then Dame Nature's God displays
His maisterhaun' on Garpel braes.
The lapwing's weet, the muircock's craw,
The murmur o' some waterfa',
The plover's wail, an' curlew's cry
Atremblin' on the air gaes by;
The cuckoo's voice noo an' again
Awakes the echo o' the glen,
An' there the lav'rock leaves its nest
An' shakes the dewdraps aff its breast,
Then, soarin' upwards, leads the praise
In Nature's choir on Garpel braes.
In life's gled morn, wi' sinless joy,
I rambled there a barefit boy,
Wi' wee bare feet an' duddie claes
I ranted ower the heathy braes,
Or lingered by the Garpel's side
An' dookit in its flowing tide.
Syne on some mossy knowe did lie
An' viewed the ever-changing sky;
Saw in the clouds that floated there
Cities an' castles in the air,
An' pictured on the azured skies
The golden gates o' paradise.

OUR GOOD LADY

In Wellwood vale the Water Ayr
Gaes wimplin' onward tae the sea,
An' high abune Polwharnel muir
The laverock sings in harmonie;
The simmer sun's effulgent rays
Caress the slopes o' dark Wardlaw,
An' glints along the bonnie braes
Whaur stands the stately Wellwood Ha'.
Within a fair pine-clad demesne
It stands, a gray an' ivied pile,
Presidin' ower a muirlandd scene
Whaur heath an' harebells bloom the while.
On hawthorn hoar an' rowan tree
The snaw-white blossoms sweetly blaw,
An' chantin' birds an' dronin' bee
Sing homage tae the Wellwood Ha'.
But though Polwharnel's heathy knowes
An' whisp'rin' pinewuds charm the e'e,
What though sweet Wellwood's daisied howes
An' stately Ha' are guid tae see;
Though a' may form a poet's dream,
The muses soar abune them a',
An' humbly lilts a nobler theme—
The gentle Lady o' the Ha'.
Wi' thochtfu' min' the village poor
She watches ower wi' tentie care;
Should cauldribe want ca' at their door
Her kindly spirit leads her there;
Then hunger, sickness, an' distress,
On sable pinions flit awa',
An' gratefu' cottars thank an' bless
The kindly Lady o' the Ha'.
In a' oor schemes tae help the poor
Oor gentle Lady leads the way;
In a' guid wark success is sure
Aneath her wise an' earnest sway.
An' noo the sick, the halt, the lame,
In rural cot or miners' raw,
In gratefu' whispers breathe her name—
The kindly Lady o' the Ha'.
An' weel we ken her ain kind hert
Has suffered mickle grief an' pain,
In which we a' wad tak' a pairt
An' mak' her sorrow a' oor ain.
May happiness her life attend,
Frae mornin's licht tae e'enin' fa',
An' God His peace an' comfort send
Tae bless the Lady o' the Ha'.

WULLIE AND BELL

Somewhere in the village, but this ye may ken—
A raw ower the water, no' far frae the en'—
Amang kindly neebors there leeve by theirsel'
A worthy aul' couple ca'd Wullie an' Bell.

For eighty lang twelvemonths, an' maybe it's mair,
They've plodded life's journey, this canty aul' pair,
Yet time wi' his snedder has failed tae expel
The vim an' the vigour frae Wullie an' Bell.

Leal-herted an' true, an' as honest as day,
They say what they think an' aye mean what they say,
Baith canny an' frugal, an' thrifty an' fell—
A when should tak' lessons frae Wullie an' Bell.

Within their wee biggin', aye snoddit an' clean,
Some aul'-fashont objects are there tae be seen,
Though no very costly, or dear in themsel',
Are priceless in value tae Wullie an' Bell.

An' auld-fashioned cupboard crammed fu' o' nicnacks,
Frae wee cheena figures tae haun-pentit plaques,
An' aul'-worl' portraits hung roon' on a nel—
The lang-deid ancestors o' Wullie an' Bell.

A weel-hain'd colection o' queer-shapet delf,
An' lang stoopit teapots displayed on a shelf,
Forbye an aul' waggy that claims for itsel'
A life-lang acquaintance wi' Wullie an' Bell.

A weel scribbit table, some aul'-fashioned chairs,
An' ane or twa buffies, in need o' repairs,
Made priceless by mem'ries that work like a spell,
An' twine roon the hert-strings o' Wullie an' Bell.

MODERN EDUCATION (Continued)

Auld 'Nosey Parker,' don't ye see,
We get them frae the parish free."
"Then, boy, wi' a' thae books indeed
There maun be something in yer heid.
I'll be yer maister for a turn—
Wha led the Scots at Bannockburn?"
He screwed his face, then closed an' e'e,
An' then his answer slow returns—
"I think it was King Robert Burns."
The three hairs on my cran'um stuid,
But I remarked "tha's guid, that's guid;
While on this subject, tell me, pray,
A thing that happened on that day."
He clawed his heid, then clawed agane,
Nae doot tae rouse his dormant brain;
Then mumbled past his stinkin' fag—
"I hae the answer in my bag."
A' richt, my boy, now pray me tell,
Can you the word "manoeuvre" spell?
Again he mumbled past his fag—
"A doot I'll hae tae look my bag."
"Weel answered, boy, I'll gie ye then
A question that ye ocht tae ken—
In this Peace League o' Nations game
What man has won the greatest fame?"
Tae see him then was quite a treat,
His een stuck oot like big pot feet,
He waved his airms an' kicked his bag,
An' wi' excitement chewed his fag,
Then shouted oot wi' micht an' main—
"Muirkirk Athletic's back—Toe Bain."
Ere I recovered frae the shock,
The boy had humphed again his pock;
An' up the street his hook had ta'en,
Wi' weel-learned bag, an' empty brain.
'Tis surely, then, the want o' sense,
Tae tax us a' wi' mair expense;
For modern learnin' seems nae guid.
Stands puir aul' Scotlan' whaur she did
When tae the skuil boys only took
Reader, Bible, and Question Book.
The maister he did a' the rest
By word o' mooth—by far the best,
For here at hame, an' ower the sea,
Auld Scotlan's sons wi' thae books three,
An' willin' hauns, an' weel-stockit brain,
A big fat job could aye obtain.

MODERN EDUCATION

I'm tickled wi' this great narration
Tae gie the weans mair education,
An' wi' mair learnin' swall their nobbs
Tae hitch them on tae big fat jobs.
It mak's me laugh, an' I'm nae full;
For instance, tak' the Comp'ny's Skuil,
I'm vexed tae say't, but I am shair
Maist a' the boys that's taught doon there
Will hae tae toil an' dae their bit
Tae earn their breid in Walwood Pit.
I'd teach them, then, tae use wi' skill
A number ten big square-mooth shuil.
While in the tid, let me relate
What happened on a certain date.
While daun'rin doon the Furnace Road,
I met a boy wha humphed a load,
'Twas maist as big's a coalman's sack,
An' tied wi' straps across his back;
An' seemed tae be nae or'nar' wecht,
For aye the laddie hotch't an' hech't.
"Guid bless my life," says I, "my boy,
Ye maun be in some scamp's employ;
That load will a' yer muscles rack,
An' leave ye wi' a green-stick back."
The laddie glowerd, then grinned an' laughed,
An' cried—"Hullo! auld cock, ye'r daft;
Here, gie's a spunk tae licht my fag—
Why, don't you see, its my skuil bag."
He gied a hotch tae turn it roon',
When, lo, the bag turned upside doon;
An' it's as true as jeuks are jeuks,
There, on the grun' lay thirty books.
An' there they lay, a queer mixed lot—
Extracts frae Shakespeare, Byron, Scott,
Latin' an' French la parley vous,
An' drawin' books a' traced wi' blue,
Readers an' primers near a score,
Wi' passbooks, jotters, in galore,
But though I searched wi' anxious e'e
The fient a bible could I see;
But there (his ain), it mak's me sick
Some weel-thoomed yarns frae Deadwood Dick.
Wi' some queer thochts I turned aboot,
An' said "My boy, I raither doot
Yer faither maun hae lots o' cash
Tae fill yer bag wi' a' this hash.."
He winked an' said, "gae 'wa, ye're daft,
My faither's no sae davert saft;

WULLIE AND BELL (Continued)

An' what a kin' welcome ye get frae the pair—
"Come ben man, come ben man, an' draw in yer chair,
An' tak' o' whut's gaun man, an' spread for yersel"
Nae high-floun manoeuvres wi' Wullie an' Bell.

An' Wullie, aye cheery ower-by in the neuk,
His mem'ry still gleg an' as guid as a book,
Intelligent, shrewd, wi' a weel stockit min',
Can fairly enthral ye wi' tales o' langsyne.

His lang life's experience o' what he has seen,
On things that hae happened, the changes that's been,
An' Wullie, I'm certain, a volume could fill
On tares he has seen in the forge an' the mill.

When Hodge, Tammas Weir, an' George Harkness drap in,
The bouncin', the splores, an' the stories begin
On wark they accomplished when they were young men—
There's some big "heats" puddled at Wullie's fire-en'.

An' often afore the aul' cronies adjourn,
Their jokes an' their splores tak' a soberer turn;
Wi' herts fu' o' sairness they sadly reca'
An' speak o' the cronies that's deid an' awa'.

An' noo this aul' couple o' smeddum an' worth
Are endin' their days in the place o' their birth;
An' may oor Creator an' Author Himsel'
Confer special blessin's on Wullie an' Bell.

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MODERN PATRIOTISM

See when yon sodjer hero fa's,
Sair wounded unto daith;
He sends tae heaven a whispered prayer,
Breathed wi' his pairtin' braith—
While frae his gapin' wounds, the earth
His life's bluid redly stains—
"Tae God an' tae my country's care,
I leave my orphan weans.

An' see that sodjer's weedow mourn
Beside a hauf-oot fire;
Aroon' her cling her shiverin' bairns,
In scant threed-bare attire,
Wha sab—their wee herts like tae brek—
"Whaur has oor daddy gane?"
She faulds them tae her breist an' moans
"God help my orphan weans."

Then you wha dress in gaudy claes,
An' costly jewels wear,
Wha's every wish is gratified,
An' siller hae tae spare;
Remeber that your hoarded wealth,
By richt, is no' yer ain;
That sodjer gied his life for you—
Then clothe his orphan wean.

An' you wha vilely rob the puir—
Ye vulture profiteers
Wha fatten on the weedow's groans,
Nor heed the orphan's tears;
When ower yer ill-begotten wealth,
Ye gloat like greedy swine,
Remember that the orphan's God
Said "Vengeance shall be mine."

TAM WEIR (Continued)

An' if for some purpose ye want tae fin' oot
The time something happened, an' still hae a doot
O' whether it happened in this or that year,
Tae mak' yersel' certain jist speir at Tam Weir.

A hard-headed Scotsman, endowed wi' guid sense
An' pawkie Scotch humour that's something immense,
An' coupled wi' shrewdness an' keen native wit,
Tam's a poo'er in himsel' when occasions permit.

In fac' at this age Tam's a marvel indeed;
The langer he leeves, aye the langer his heid.
Aff-luif he can gie, withoot stammer or steg,
Quotations frae Rabbie as lang as his leg.

On Rab's natal day, when Burnsonians meet,
Its mair than a pleasure tae hear Tam repeat
Rab's praise o' the haggis, an' richt aff the reel
His "Holy Wull's Prayer" an' "Address tae the Deil."

In politics, Tammas is bauld for his side—
Thae bluid-suckin' maisters he can not abide;
But contra tae mony a yae-sided ass,
He's braw weel aware o' the fauts o' his class.

In social improvements he aye tak's a pairt,
An' Co-operation is dear tae his he'rt;
A fervid Freemason, an' king o' the Craft,
When ye fa' aff the goat Tam lets ye doon saft.

A reader an' thinker, Tam comes o' a race
Wha gained for auld Scotlan' the very front place
Amang a' the nations that people the Earth,
For dour independence, an' smeddum, an' worth.

That best o' a' blessings—a leal-hearted wife,
Attends weel tae Tam as he journeys through life,
An' aye since the day when he claimed her a bride,
There's nae place tae Tammas like his ain fireside.

May happiness, health, an' sweet comfort atten'
The peacefu' hame circle at Tammie's fire-en';
An' Daith on his rambles forget tae come near
Oor worthy auld toonsman—the bauld Tammas Weir.

IN MEMORIAM (Continued)

A fav'rite wi' children, esteemed by their fouk,
Could tell a guid story, an' fond o' a joke;
In mansion or cottage was welcomed by a'—
Tam laid doon his needle an' drappit awa'.

Tae honest John Lindsay, the passenger gaird,
Daith's order cam swiftly, but John was prepared;
So Death blew his whistle, the signal was given—
John's a pensioner noo in the terminus—Heaven.

An' ither twa aul' yins wha got the dread ca'
Were aul' Rob McMillan, Wull Johnstone an' a'—
Twae deep-thinking buddies gey wise an' discreet
'Twas mair than a pleasure tae veesit or meet.

Baith born o' the people, an' sons o' the soil,
They found life's enjoyment in health-givin' toil;
Though wealth never ventured ower near their abode,
They leaved in contentment an' trusted in God.

Prood man is a puppet, he comes an' he goes,
While ither come throngin' tae reap what he sows;
They pass in succession an' leave not a trace,
An' new generations step into their place.

So soon' the aul' kirk or else up on the brae,
Oor sairly missed aul' yins lie mouldrin' away;
Though a' that was mortal lies under the sod,
Their mem'ries are wi' us, their souls wi' their God.

* * * *

TAM WEIR

When gaun for a dauner alang the Main Street,
An auld residenter ye gey often meet,
Wha speers for yer health wi' his haun at his ear—
His name (ye'll hae guessed it), the bauld Tammas Weir.

No far frae the spot where he first saw the licht,
Tam dauners amangst us, aye cheery an' bricht;
O' aul' warl' stories he hauds a guid store
Anent oor auld toon an' its ancient folklore.

An' should ye meet Tammas an' fa' on the crack,
His mem'ry can tak' him 'bune saxty years back;
An' frae his rententive an' weel stockit min',
Can fairly enthrall ye wi' tales o' langsyne.

MODERN PATRIOTISM (Continued)

An' you wha fab'lous wages earn,
An' free frae every care,
Wha though the British Fleet wis sunk
Wad never turn a hair;
When asked the least to sacrifice,
Ye threaten an' complain—
Go, see the bluid-drenched trenches, an'
The sodjer's orphan wean.

An' you wha strike an' gamble wi'
Yer country's darkest 'oor,
Because it opens up yer chance
Tae grasp at wealth an' po'er;
When pleasure, luxury, an' ease,
Ye madly strive tae gain—
It mains maur cauld an' hunger for
The sodjer's orphan wean.

Wi' lurkin' traitors in oor midst,
An' spies on every haun',
While opportunism, Self, an' Greed,
Gang stalkin' through the lan';
A' thae combined wi' senseless grab,
Hae patriotism slain—
O what a legacy tae leave
The sodjer's orphan wean!

Then Britons a', be true, be men,
Afore its ower late,
Remember that a waur-than-hell
Is thund'rin' at yer gate;
Then cast yer selfish aims awa'—
Frae greed an' grab abstain,
Or generations yet unborn
Will brand ye worse than cain.

EPISTLE TO JOHN WHYTE, ENTRYHEID

I'm thinkin', John, there's something wrang,
Or maybe wi' the birds ye're thrang,
For though I scan the Cumnock News,
An' Advertiser aye peruse,
Week follows week but no a screed
O' rhymin' ware frae Entryheid;
I doot the muse, the fickle jade,
Has some ramsteerie tantrum played,
An' ta'en Pegasus reins in tow
An' vanished up Parnassus Knowe;
Then though ye tune an' twang yer lyre,
Withoot ae spark o' Nature's fire
May claw yer heid, dip pen in ink,
But no' a line ye'll get tae clink.
Then may the muse divert her steed
An' canter back tae Entryheid,
Though min' ye, John, yer daily ploy
Maun be tae you a source o' joy;
'Way in the muirlan' solitude,
Far frae the maddenin' crood,
There howkin' in some mossy drain
Poesy claims you for her ain
An' tunes yer hert tae thochts sublime
Tae send them forth in deathless rhyme.
A glorious page o' Naturte's book
Lies open wide where'er ye look—
The grandeur o' the silent hills
Wi' solemn awe yer bosom fills,
The laverock's music in the sky,
The plover's wail, the curlew's cry,
The moorcock's bauld "go-bek," "go-bek,"
The boomin' snipe—a whurrin' speck
The peesweep's "weet-weet" on the lea,
The passin' hum o' laden bee,
The murmur o' the babblin' brook
That 'mong the brekins dance an' jouk,

IM MEMORIAM

King Daith, the dread Reaper, is busy the noo,
Amang residerenters wi' age on their broo;
An' a' in the space o' a twalmonth or sae
A gey wheen o' auld yins hae drappit away.

The feck o' the auld yins the Reaper has ta'en,
Braw weel I hae kent them since I was a wean;
An' seein' them daily for sic a lang spell,
They seemed like a pairt o' the village itsel'.

Waes me, what a loss was oor kind-he'rted Laird,
Wha claimed frae the village esteem an' regard;
A laird in a thousan', the kindest, the best,
But Daith took him frae us awa tae his rest.

An' Robert A. Leslie, wha lang, lang had been
Tae folk in the village a mentor an' freen'.
An' for oor best welfare a life's work he gave,
Till Daith took him frae us awa tae the grave.

An' Daith stilled the he'rt o' anither aul' chiel,
Oor churchman an' elder, John Weir o' Heathfiel';
In Schuil Bo'rd an' Cooncil he took a lang pairt,
An' aye had the guid o' the village at he'rt.

A strange eerie silence encircles Cairn Hoose,
Where dwalt Davie Cruthers, gey canny and doose;
There oft in the e'enin' he spent his quiet 'oors
Frae tending his patients, he tended his floo'ers.

But Daith, the dread Reaper, cam' doon in the nicht,
And bore honest Davie awa frae oor sicht,
An' left, through the want o' his kindness and skill,
A void in the village time never can fill.

An' worthy Tam Whyte, my aul' cronie an' freen',
Has ended life's journey, and gane frae the scene
He loved and frequented, as child, boy, an' man;
So ended his journey where childhood began.

Weel gifted wi' talents no gi'en tae the crood,
Tae ca' him a native the village was prood;
A hard-heided Scotsman an' ane o' the last
Auld vilage worthies that's deein' oot fast.

He studied Dame Nature in a' her queer moods,
His books were the moorlan's, the glens, and the woods;
A wee gowden primrose on some burnie's brim,
Was mair than a flo'oer or primrose tae him.

THE LAIRD O' MEIKLE'S RAW (Continued)

Tam Anderson, wi' lang horse-hair,
Was fishin' minnans aff the flair,
When, lo! a yell gaed through the room—
The heuk had stuck in Tammie's thoom.
An' C. Macdonald frae the square
Was cuttin' names oot on his chair;
While Davie Samson an' Hugh Park
Were plannin' some mischievous lark.
An' fancyin' still, I plain could see
Big Dominie Smith an' wee Broonlee
Tae a' the boys lay doon the laws
By word o' mooth, an' wecht o' tawse.
Some lassies there I couldna name,
Though native "Auld Yins" a' the same;
Till Fancy brocht them tae my min',
The blushing belles o' auld lang syne.
There Jenny Train, a strappin' queen,
Wi' rogish smile an' glancin' een,
An' fu' o' fun, was weel prepared
Tae throw sheep's een up at the Laird.
Drest in her daidley, trig an' braw,
The sonsiest lass in the ha',
Wi' sober mein, an' fu' o' sense,
A lassie sat ca'd Nannie Spence.
Noo I could name a guid when mair
O' lads an' lassies wha sat there,
But they were a'—I shouldna tell—
A guid bit younger than mysel'.
An' thus three glorious 'oors were spent
Wi' mirth an' joy an' sweet content;
An' when the "Auld Yins" had tae pairt
A sang was croonin' in each he'rt,
That ended wi' this sweet refrain—
"It's guid tae be a bairn agane."
Then blessings on the kindly Laird,
For mony years may he be spared
Tae meet auld freen's, an' lang enjoy
Tae ramble where he roamed a boy.
An' when at length the time draws nigh
Tae heir his mansion in the sky,
May angels let this anthem fa'—
"Weel dune, the Laird o' Meikle's Raw."

EPISTLE TO JOHN WHYTE (Continued)

The bleating sheep, the lowing kine
Enraptures your poetic min',
The blushin' gowans on the brae
By poets c'd the eye o' day,
The heatherbell o' purple hue
Co-minglin' wi' the harebells blue,
The sundew peepin' roun' the well,
The yarrow's sweet an' fragrant smell,
The odour o' the rhyme-clad braes
Remindin' ye o' bygone days,
The wavin' fern, the purple heath,
The lichens peepin' up beneath,
Forget-me-nots o' heavenly blue,
The primrose on the burnie's broo,
Ye lo'e them a', an' ken they're given
Tae link thegither earth an' heaven.
I fancy, John, ye often pause
An' wuner at the great First Cause,
Wha made this wondrous earth o' oors—
Its hills, its glens, its birds, its flo'ers,
An' poised in space the temmin' ball,
The why and wherefore of it all.
Enthralled, ye view the boundless skies,
An' meditate an' moralise,
An' try tae solve the great unklown,
Till reason totters on her throne;
Then when the licht begins tae fade,
Ye cease yer wark, lay by yer spade,
An' ponder, as ye hameward plod,
On Nature's laws an' Nature's God.
Noo, John, my muse has ta'en the hump,
Forbye, my pencil's noo a stump,
Then may this find ye thus employed,
Yours, in doggerel—Tammis Floyd.

EPISTLE TO T. FLOYD

Freen' Tammas, it was awfu' kind
Tae keep me warmly in yer mind;
I doot the muse will hae a strissle
Tae answer yer esteemed epistle.
It fairly kittled me tae think
That ye had missed my crambo-clink;
Weel, Tammas, nocht's been wrang ava,
But jist the muse has kept awa'.
The gumption frae yer pencil en'
Gars my frail muse come oorrie ben—
Tim'rous like, an' unco shy,
Wonderin' hoo she'll mak reply.
Noo in yer lines ye hae displayed
Hoo Nature's gloriously arrayed—
The jinkin' burn, the birds an' flo'ers
Ye've met wi' in yer leisure 'oors.
Ye wondered if my want o' words
Was caused through workin' 'mang the birds,
An' deathless rhymes I micht hae made
While workin' wi' my lang steel blade.
The birds this year hae had a rest,
They took some ailment gaun tae nest;
I don't richt ken what was the cause,
It micht hae been through Nature's laws.
When at my ploy wi' axe or spade
In some flowe-moss or sunny glade;
While lanely there, my thochts ascend
Tae the Beginning an' the End.
Wellwood's heathery heichts I scan,
Whaur ance roamed prehistoric man;
For a' aroon on hill an' field
Unwritten history is revealed.
Yon Aitkler Burn that joins the Ayr
Some ancient dwellings are laid bare,
Whaur ancient urn an' warrior's dart
Gie insight o' a savage art.
Plain tae my view 'midst heath an' fern
Are ancient mound an' chieftain's cairn,
Whaur Nature's seen in social joy—
Such are the scenes aroon' my ploy.
When hamewards bent my fitsep steers,
I ponder o'er the vanished years,
Or aiblins on the flicht o' time,
Or try tae put my thochts in rhyme.
Noo, Tammas, tho' ye ne'er hae wealth,
I wish ye lang that gran' thing—health;
Excuse the feckless lines ye read.
Aye yours, John Whyte o' Entryheid.

THE LAIRD O' MEIKL'ES RAW

Wi' richt guid-wull I lift my pen
Tae humbly praise the wale o' men,
Wha claims respect frae ane an' a'—
The kindly Laird o' Meikle's Raw.
Descendant o' a brawny race—
The village blacksmiths o' the place;
Though mergin' on for four score an' ten,
He's still a Saul 'mang or'nar men;
An' though in England he sojourns,
Tae auld Muirkirk he aye returns
Tae meet auld freen's, and there enjoy
A ramble where he roamed a boy.
His faither's park, the Company's knowe,
Or doun where Ayr's deep waters rowe,
Up by the Forge, an' roun' Rigen',
The Sanquhar Muir, the Garpel Glen,
Cairntable's cairns, an' Wardlaw's braes,
Aye min' him o' his boyhood days.
An', prompted thus, his Christian he'rt
Resolved tae play a kindly pairt,
That wi' God's wull he'd meet an' dine
Wi' "Auld Yins" that he kent lang syne.
Sae sune aroon' his festive board
The "Auld Yins" sat in gled accord.
Sic joy and mirth pervaded a',
That Time and Age fled frae the ha',
A' Fancy, famed for sic-like ploys,
Transformed them a' tae girls auld boys.
An' lo! the Laird sat in his chair—
A weel-faured boy wi' curly hair;
An' sitting close tae catch his ear,
A cheeky boy ca'd Tammas Weir.
An' farer ower, all on his own,
A steeron' coon ca'd Tammas Sloan.
There, up tae ev'ry mirthfu' dodge,
Sat stalwart Jock and Jamie Hodge,
An' Geordie Harkness at the back
Was stickin' preens in Geordie Jack;
An' An'ra Clement, pawkie chiel,
Was makin' lasses lauch and squeal;
An' Tammas Watson, fu' o' joy,
Was singing like a wee herd boy.

THE DAYS ARE A' AWAY (Continued)

The days we sent a Valentine
Tae some ane on the sly;
We slipp'd it in ablow the door,
Whaur she was kent tae lie;
But, if her dad came on the scene,
There was the deil to pay—
A kick ahin', an' daddit lugs—
Thae days are a' away.

The days we tapped the button on
Auld Molly's winda' pane,
Puir Molly thocht auld Nicky Ben
Had come tae claim his ain;
She crossed hersel', and then began
Tae coont her beads an' say—
"The howly Saints presarve me now"—
Thae days are a' away.

The days we plagued auld "Girny Gibb,"
Aye crabbit, soor, and glum;
We cut a great big turfy sod
An' placed it on his lum;
Near chok't wi' reek he sallied forth,
An' chased us doon the brae;
He had tae stop for want o' braith—
Thae days are a' away.

The days we waited quietly, till
Auld "Blowhard" gaed tae bed;
We dunnert on his winda' frame,
Let fa' some gless an' fled;
Maist in his sark, he hurried oot,
Tae murder an' tae slay,
If only he could catch the whalps—
Thae days are a' away.

The day we leaned a big thorn buss,
Against Maginty's door,
Then gied a knock, an' hid tae see
The fun we had in store:
When tae the door Maginty cam',
Nae doot in winner whae,
The buss fell in !!! I'll say nae mair—
Thae days are a' away.

I maun confess that I hae still
A craving noo and then,
Tae place a sod on some yin's lum,
An' be a boy again;
The only thing that hauds me back
Is what the folk wad say—
"Jist look at that auld doited fuil—
His days are a' away."

SECOND EPISTLE TO JOHN WHITE, ENTRYHEID

John, when I read yer last epistle,
I fairly glowered an' gied a whistle,
Says I—"I'll bate my steekit neive
The Muse has aye been up yer sleeve."
For, by my trow, yer waley rhyme
Wis pawky, siccar, an' sublime,
An' uttered forth in every pairt
The inner promptin's o' yer he'rt,
An' shows the bias o' yer mind
Tae spiel Parnassus is inclined,
An' proves ye search in Nature's lore
Her secret wonders tae explore;
An' then, forbye, ye hae a penchant
Tae study a' things auld an' ancient,
While a' yer ither traits reveal
A thinking', douce, by-or'nar' chiel.

Weel, John, my canty rhymin' brither,
I'll try an' swap ye wi' anither
(Though no amang the gifted few)
Wha wear the holly roon their broo)
Sae in beside the ingle neuk
Wi' pencil an' wi' jottin' book
I grunt an' groan, an' twang my lyre
(O, for a spark o' Nature's fire!)
Alas! my lyre gaes scarce a soun',
An' a' its strings are oot o' tune,
But I hae notions in my noddle
I lang hae nursed an' sometimes coddle;
Wi' them I'll weave a doggerel screed,
An' post it on tae Entryheid.

Ye min' the stroll we had the gither
On Wellwud muir amang the heather
A couthie crack we had that day
On various subjects—grave an' gay.
The day was guid, we took a turn
Oot by Knoweheid tae Rocky Burn,

SECOND EPISTLE TO JOHN WHYTE (Continued)

Whaur he wha rins may plainly trace
The dwellin's o' an' ancient race.
We tarried here in thochtfu' mood
An' viewed the ancient dwellin's rude,
Till in oor min's cam' throngin' fast
Weird versions o' a vanished past.
Wha made the mounds, wha laid each stane?—
Their memory an' their names are gane;
Their hatred, love, joy, hopes, an' fear
Hae left nae trace or record here,
But, like a dirge, time's fleetin' sigh
Borne on the breeze gaed soughin' by.
We lingered here till ance the sun
His daily course had nearl run,
An' dusk wis creepin' doon the glen
Atween Wardlaw an' Blacksidin'.

Then, in the gloamin's deepenin' gray
We journeyed on our hameward way.
In coorse o' we landed where
A rustic footbridge spans the Ayr.
We, on that rustic brig o' wood
In sober contemplation stood
An' viewed the Ayr gae ripplin' doon
Wi' mind-relaxin' soothin' soun';
'Twas then ye made an observation
Anent the problem o' creation.
If men o' science had the eons,
A' analysed an' in abeyance,
They'd hae, like haunted Frankenstaen,
A sma' creation o' their ain.
Weel, if they dae, they'll raise a squabble,
An' hae confusion worse than Babel,
An' mak' puir creatures wunner whether
God or science was their faither.

THAE DAYS ARE A' AWAY

I aften sit beside the fire,
An' muse on aul' langsyne;
Till veesions o' my boyhood days
Come croodin' in my min'.
I see again that gentle form
Wha taught me first tae pray;
I've gaen a waefu' gait since then—
Thae days are a' away.

The days we guddled in the burns,
An' played at "Hounds an' Hare,"
Or searched the field for peeweepp eggs,
An' set on fire the muir;
An' played "Row-chowie" doon a bank
Till we were black an' blae;
But bruisin' bumps were naething then—
Thae days are a' away.

The days, when frosty winter cam',
We made a famous slide
On Lees's brae, along the street,
Where we in rags did glide;
At "Shae the Horse" and "Hunker Doon,"
We made a great display,
An' whiles we slid it on yae fit—
Thae days are a' away.

The days we made oor Caunle-boats
Frae neeps at Hallowe'en,
An' carved queer figures roon' their sides
Tae let the licht be seen;
We acted brave "Galashuns" then,
An' made a great adae,
Wi' paper hats an' widden swords—
Thae days are a' away.

We dook't for aipples in a bine,
Or forked them ower a chair;
An' in "Blin' Buff" we learned oor fate
Frae dishes on the flair;
An' in the fire we placed oor nuts,
Tae see what they wud dae,
Tae cuddle close, or flee apairt—
Thae days are a' away.

Or else the treacled bawbee scone
Suspended on a string,
Wi' baith oor hauns tied at oor back,
We tried tae gansh the thing;
But though it looked an easy job,
We found it ill tae dae,
A treacled nose was a' we got—
Thae days are a' away.

THE LOCOMOTIVE'S LAMENT (Continued)

An' when the driver brings me hame
An' books me for repairs,
The foreman sadly shakes his heid,
Then blaws his nose an' stares,
An' growls, "Ye canna get them dune
Afore a month or sae;
The 8.10 driver needs her for
His aicht 'oor day.

Wi' passin' through sae mony hauns
I'm hingin' fair in rags,
My dirty tubes are never sponged,
My poo'er o' steamin fags;
The thumpin' o' my richt big en'
Is heard some miles away—
The left ane jined the chorus
Wi' the aicht 'oor day.

A dizen tubes are leakin' sair,
An' rinnin' like a burn;
My spin'le packin's a' blawn oot—
They badly need a turn;
My slideblocks clink atween the bars
Wi' hauf an' inch o' play—
A sad an' painfu' sequel tae
The aicht 'oor day.

Wi' drivin' boxes rinnin' hot,
An' knockin' like a mell,
The driver says he's clean fed up
An' disna care a hell;
He says tae try and keep things richt
Wad turn his napper gray,
An' tak' awa' the pleasure o'
His aicht 'oor day.

Tae work an engine nicht an' day
Is jist a bloomin' sin;
I guess the time is comin' when
We'll a' be labbert dune;
Nae wunner that the drivers grouse
An' lose their rag an' say—
"We'll sune get cleeks an' girrs tae work
Oor aicht 'oor day."

If I could only get a chance
Tae meet the "poo'ers that be,"
I'd blaw my steam aboot their lugs
An' toot my earnest plea—
Tae hae yae driver tae oorsel',
A raiglar fireman tae,
An' book us aff when we hae wroucht
An' aicht 'oor day.

SECOND EPISTLE TO JOHN WHITE (Continued)

Then, mark me, John, 'tween you an' me
They should let Nature's laws abee,
An' quately follow their behest,
Because her plan is far the best.
Jist gaze abroad on wood an' field,
What wondrous wisdom's there revealed;
When Nature joins wi' Mother Earth
They giveth forth a glorious birth
O' burstin' leaves an' openin' floo'ers
Whose gaudy tints the bee allures.
The woin' birds in plumage dressed
Sing sweetly o'er their love-mate's nest;
An' a' the animals that rove
On moor an' field, or shady grove,
Are by that Master-hand designed
To love an' reproduce their kind.
Then he maun be a senseless clod
Wha sneers an' says there's no' a God,
An' argues that the atoms dance
An' mix thegither a' by chance,
An' by some funny process pan
Oot a bird, a beast, a man,
An' thus combined the atoms give
A creature that can breathe an' live.
For three score years or less nae doot,
The creature struts an' walks aboot,
When lo! the combine falls asunder,
An' then the creature's buried under.
In coorse o' time (I'm not insane),
An', in remixin', whiles anew
Their combine as a horse or coo.
Aweel, if such transitions pass,
I hope that clod comes back an' ass.
Noo, John, I maun lay doon my pen,
It's drawin' on tae hauf-past ten;
"Put oot the gas" (the wife's annoyed),
I'm yours sincerely—Thomas Floyd.

SECOND EPISTLE TO T. FLOYD

Dear freen', yer welcome lines I've read;
Man, Tam, hoo quickly time has fled!
Hoo short it seems since boys th'gither
We ran about wi' ane anither!

As I Epistle Twa pursued,
On days gane by I fondly mused:
Yer gratefu' lines each other linkin',
Yer letters aye put me athinkin'.

Deep memories they hae recalled,
Remindin' me I'm getting auld,
An' bringin' youthfu' days tae min',
That tak's me back tae auld lang syne.

Last stroll we took in pensive mood
Whaur pre-historic dwellin's stood;
Next walk we'll tak', be't sune or late,
Tae Laigh Dalfram o' ancient date.

An aged plane still marks the spot
Where near-by stood the poet's cot;
There they hae built, for memory's sake,
A rustic cairn tae Bauld Lapraik.

Ye mention science an' the airts
O' mixin' some mysterious pairs,
That, efter lying by tae brew,
Become a man, bird, horse or coo.

They'll reckon floo'ers the same wey mixed,
Their various hues their perfumes fixed,
They're germinated by the sun,
An' scattered wi' a blast o' win.

But, Tam, that crowdie winna dae;
Let sceptics thank an' hae their way,
That wee bit something tha's within
Leads us tae ken there's Poo'ers abune.

Through gifts that's gi'en tae mortal man
Some strange devices they can plan,
For we are leivin' in a day
O' science an' inventions tae.

Oor doctors noo ken ilka germ
That enters man tae dae him hairm,

THE LOCOMOTIVE'S LAMENT

Although a pair insensate thing,
An' made o' ern an' steel,
An' no' supposed tae hae a sowl,
I still can think an' feel;
So, while my water's on the boil
I'll toot a verse or twae
On what I think an' feel about
The aicht 'oor day.

A' oiled an' ready tae their hauns,
The driver an' his mate
Come driddlin' oot ahint their time—
They're gey an' often late;
The whistle blaws, an' on three legs
I toddle on my way—
The ither leg has struck against
The aicht 'oor day.

We hop alang until we reach
A busy shuntin' yaird,
When, Gosh! a crood o' tinsey ban's
Come yaupin' roon' the gaird;
An' yae big fat inspector roars—
"Get on a move, I say;
Keep min' that ye're oot tae wark
An aicht 'oor day.

An' hang it a', I notice, mate
Ye hinna on yer load,
Sae hurry up an' lift some 'Norths,'
Ye'll get them through the road;
They're sittin' bare, a handy catch,
Tie on, an' richt away;
We maun hae nae detention in
An aicht 'oor day."

It's hurry, hurry, a' the time—
Aicht 'oors o' stress an' strain
Alike when shuntin' in a yaird,
Or rinnin' wi' a train;
They seem tae think the only wey
Tae mak' the railways pay,
Is work the wark o' twal oors in
An aicht 'oor day.

The driver seldom gets the chance
Tae oil my gearin' roon';
The fireman daurna clean my fire,
Nor rub my boiler doon;
My brasses that were ance sae bricht
Are noo a hodden gray;
My whistle wears deep mournin' for
The twal 'oor day.

TAM WHYTE (Continued)

Again, oor auld worthy, as you will surmise,
Gaes in for collectin' moths, beetles, an' flies,
An' mony an e'ening Tam spen's wi' his net,
Explorin' the parish for what he can get.

An' should a rare insect appear on the scene,
Sae anxious is Tammass tae see't on a preen,
Though bord'rin' on eighty I'm certian an' sure,
Tam sprints for that insect at twal miles an' oor.

Tae view his collection is truly a treat,
There's moths, jenny-spinners, an' meg-mony-feet,
An' butterflies gethered frae moorland and dell,
An' some gey an' rare anes cocooned by himsel'.

Perhaps ye will scoff me, an' laugh when I say,
I've tauld but the hauf o' what Tammass can dae,
For aye in the spring-time an' lang simmer 'oors,
He adds tae his hobbies an' cultivates floo'ers.

He dabbles in fossils, an' searches the stanes,
An' studies wi' pleasure the ancient remains
That prove a Creation lang vanished an' past,
Ere man frae the Gairden o' Eden was cast.

Aquainted wi' sorrow, nae stranger tae grief,
Tam finds in his hobbies a welcome relief,
An' reaps in this world o' venom an' strife
The pleasure an' peace o' weel ordered life.

Then a' ye time-wasters that warm 'Culloch's dyke,
Ye widna-sole hatchers, or ony sic-like,
Just imitate Tammass, an' ramble abroad,
An' study through Nature the wonders o' God.

SECOND EPISTLE TO T. FLOYD (Continued)

Wi' microbes through the system scrievin'
It's quite a danger tae be leivin'.

An' surgeons wi' that gleg discretion
Belangin' tae their gran' profession,
If o' yer trouble they've a doot
They'll start an' turn ye inside oot.

We've telegraphy without wires,
An' boats that sail aneath the sea,
There's gramophones that sangs can sing,
An' ships that through the air can flee.

The telephone and grand X rays,
An' movin' pictures, motor cars,
An' telescopes through which they see
Canals they're howkin' up in Mars.

If a' sic like hae been afore,
We've nae sae muckle room tae splore;
The guid auld Book declares it's true—
Aneath the sun there's naething new.

Again the woods and fields are green,
Fond nature at its best is seen,
The busy bees that hae nae leisure
Frae ilk a floo'er drink hidden treasure.

The lintie's heard frae early morn
Sweet warblin' in the fragrant thorn,
The laverock's lilt is heard on high;
Wi' nature's harps the songsters vie.

The mountain high, the floo'ery lea,
The suc'lent herb, an' fruitfu' tree,
He, who those wondrous works did plan,
Can "grasp creation in a span."

Noo that ye're frae the Sma'burn flitted—
A fact I nearly had omitted,
May peace an' plenty be yer lot
Within yer canty Woodside Cot.

I fin' I'm needin' some repose,
So, Tam, I'll noo draw tae a close,
An' send ye on my blethertin' screed,
Yours ever—John Whyte, Entryheid.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO D. MILLER, AYR

1917—1918

Wi' a' my hert, I wish ye, Dave,
A happy guid New Year,
An' may it bring ye health an' strength,
An' routh o' work's gear;
An' in the mony years tae come,
Oh may ye never see
A moose gang frae yer meal pock wi'
A big tear in its e'e.

May Truth be aye yer helmsman, Dave,
An' Honour be yer guide,
An' Faith an' Hope yer beacon stars,
Whatever may betide;
An' may the winds o' Providence
Extend each spreadin' sail,
An' waft ye ower the sea o' Time,
Anither year tae hail.

An' may the muse attend ye, Dave,
An' fan the mystic flame,
Until ye set the worl' on fire—
A bard o' meikle fame;
While I, the humble lesser licht,
Ower-shadowed by the sheen,
Wull aye be prood tae ken ye are
My brither bard an' freen'.

Lang be ye spared an' wullin' then,
Parnassus hill tae spiel,
An' may the lassie on the tap
Torment an' skelp ye weel;
An' may ye on Pegasus back
Through realms of famcy fly,
Tae gether frae the fields o' thought
The floo'ers o' po-e-sy

TAM WHYTE

If when in the village ye pass Meikle's Raw,
Ye'll see a wee signboard nailed up on the wa'
Whereon in big letters the name is displayed
O' Tammas Whyte, Senior, a tailor tae trade.

For twa or three centuries, or longer than that,
Tam's worthy ancestors hae wuppit the cat,
An' Tammas aye tells as he whups in the steeks,
"A Whyte made auld Adam his first pair o' breeks."

Esteemed an' respected by a' ye may ken,
He's dubbed by his cronies "the wale o' guid men"
In fac', it's a pleasure, as mony can tell,
Tae meet an' forgether wi' Tammas himsel'.

An auld resider, an' reared in a schuil
When folk leaved on parritch an' dab-at-the-stuil;
Yont three score an' ten, he's aye workin' awa',
An' spen's his spare time wi' a hobby or twa.

A hobby o' Tam's is the Clachan's folk-lore,
Its legends an' animals he kens by the score,
An' a' its traditions since it was begun,
An' found by degrees a sma' place in the sun.

An' a' the auld ruins that lie roon about
Tam prods their foundations an' traces them oot,
Then rakes up their story an' gleans frae the past
Wha built them, wha owned them, wha leaved in them last.

The clachan's antiquities, though they are few,
Tam mak's it a hobby tae study them too,
An' mony a ramble an' tramp he has ta'en
Tae view an' examine some crannog or stane.

In fac' the hale parish Tam kens tae an inch,
Frae west o' Laigh Wellwood up by tae Darnhinch,
An' a' its grey mountains an' laigher knowe-taps
He has them a' measured an' drawn on his maps.

The streams o' the parish, each river an' brook,
He quaintly describes in his manuscript book,
An' ilka wee burn frae Bogheid tae Hareshaw,
Dod, Tammas can tell ye the names o' them a'.

DUTY'S CALL (Continued)

The hangman for the soulless knaves,
Who glibly talk and loudly rave,
 That we the huns should smash;
When they themselves are profiteers,
And privately with loathsome leers,
 Keep hauling in the cash.

A mad-house for the fat-head fools,
Who say they care not which one rules—
 King George or Kaiser Bill;
As long as they have cash to jaunt,
And nightly to the "Pictures" rant
 And eat and drink their fill.

Clay medals for some Neds at least,
Who wear wee badges on their breists
 To hide their wee'er he'rts;
To send them squirming to the Front—
That awful hell, to feel the brunt,
 Would be their just deserts.

A rope's end for the "absentees"
Who take a trembling in their knees
 When they observe a cop;
Yet still have nerve, in fours to form,
And "gallantly" attack the storm
 The nearest ice-cream shop.

The trenches for the grumblin' tikes,
Ca-canny men, and all such likes
 Who strike for higher pay,
When heroes for them give their blood,
And face grim death in slush and mud,
 For fourteen-pence a day.

The skunk "Objectors" every one
Who shows a soft-side for the Hun,
 The Kaiser and Mein Gott;
Their quoting scripture makes me sick,
I'd send them westward with a brick
(A ball's no use, their skin's too thick)
 Or promptly hang the lot.

Come all you weak-kneed shirkers, then,
Buck up, and do your bits like men,
 And answer duty's call;
And with the heroes risk your lives
For freedom, parents, children, wives,
 Your country, and your all.

LINES TO DAVID MURRAY

ENGINE DRIVER, HURLFORD

ON READING TWO OF HIS POEMS SENT FOR PERUSAL

I read wi' greatest pleesure, Dave,
Yer canty screeds o' rhyme,
They baith dae credit tae yer muse,
An' really up tae time;
Their subjects an' their sentiments
An' rhyming pleased me weel,
So dinna fear tae try again
Parnassus hill tae spiel.

Yer musin's on the ancient mill
Were guid in every pairt,
An' fairly drew response frae
A brither rhymer's he'rt;
For aye the magic o' the muse
Can draw twa he'rts thegither,
So, Davie, lad, I'm gey an' prood
Tae claim ye as a brither.

Nae doot ye ken the fickle muse
Some tantrum pliskies play,
An' chiels in every rank o' life
Her promptin's maun obey;
But, Dave, the queeriest she has played
Since Burns was at the ploo
Was when she twined the holly roon'
An engine driver's broo.

Wi' brain an' nerves aye on the strain,
Wi' lang an' tiresome 'oors,
While rackin' duties mar oor lives,
An' tackle a' oor poo'ers;
Sae if the muse should prompt us whiles,
Its hard tae fin' the time,
Tae gether gems frae Nature's store.
An' string them in to rhyme.

But ne'er-the-less the gift o' rhyme,
Like hope, eternal springs,
An' like the fragrance in the rose
Aye tae oor being clings;
Then gie us but a leisure 'oor
Tae ramble by oorsel',
That glorious gift a pleesure brings
Nane but a bard can tell.

Lang be ye spared an' willin', then,
Tae woo the muses nine,
An' may a spark o' Nature's fire
Aye occupy yer min',
An' may ye feel the pleesure that
I feel when thus employed,
Is ever aye the earnest wish
O' brither rhymer, Floyd.

REPLY TO A LEAP YEAR OFFER

Dear Sarah Green, I'm flattered wi'
Yer handsome leap year offer,
But if the answer is a "No"
Don't think that I'm a scoffer;
For I had raither far said "Yes,"
In fact, I'm on the swither,
But though I'm very fond of you,
I'm fonder o' my mither.

Braw weel I ken the mairrit life
Is natural tae us a',
A custom that has been in vogue
Since sinfu' Adam's fa';
When lovely Eve had stown his he'rt
They 'greed tae keep thegether,
But then, he hadna' my excuse—
He never had a mither.

Nae doot the Scriptures tell us a'
Tae try the mairrit life,
Tae leave oor faither's hoose an' ha',
An' cleave unto a wife;
That's very guid, but should he dee,
We soon can get anither,
But we can ne'er replace the ane—
That bore the name o' mither.

I'm share the maist o' mairrit men,
If putten tae the test,
Their very he'rts wad tell them that
They like their mither best;
For if their mither an' their wife
Were droonin' baith thegither,
I'll sweck that every nine in ten
Wid grapple first their mither.

Then, Sarah, lass, my very best
Respects tae you I send,
An' though ye canna' be my wife
I houp ye'll be my friend;
An' ablains through the coorse o' time
We'll maybe creep thegether,
But pity me, I daurna' wed
As lang's I hae a mither.

DEID AN' AWA (Continued)

Jist tak' ye for instance the Linkieburn Square,
The douce dacent faimilies wha lang bidet there—
The Loves and the Lindsays, the Murdochs, the Parks,
The Andersons, Davidsons, Cochranes, an' Clarks,

The Samsons, the Hodges, the Mitchells, the Mairs,
The Seymours, the Dixons, the Weirs, an' the Hairs,
The Williamsons, Templetons, Killins an' a'—
The maist o' the faimilies are deid an' awa.

An' so when I wauchle along the street noo,
My steps geyly shortened, my back on the boo,
There's no' a ane greets me or kens me awa,
Then I yearn for my auld frien's deid an' awa.

In God's sacred acres up by on the brae,
The feck o' my auld frien's lie waitin' the day
When God for the judgment will gie them the ca',
An' up tae His Kingdom be wafted awa.

* * * * *

DUTY'S CALL

All honour to the gallant men,
Who flocked from city, hill, and glen
To answer duty's call;
And volunteered to give their lives
For freedom, parents, children, wives,
Their country, and their all.

All honour to the anxious hearts,
Who saw through tears those men depart,
Yet nobody bade them go;
For well they knew from Belgium's fate,
The brutal lust, and fiendish hate
Of Britain's dastard foe.

All credit to those aged men,
Who will our hearths and homes defen'—
Our local Volunteers;
We know that each will do his best
To win a V.C. for his breast,
And banish all our fears.

DEID AN' AWA

At times when I ponder an' muse on lang syne,
Some lang sleepin' mem'ries awake in my min',
Then ae recollection—the saddest o' a'—
Remin's me o' auld frien's tha's deid an' awa.

I min' when a laddie—the heicht o' a stuil,
I daily attendit the auld Parish Schuil
Wi' ither wee cronies tae sit in a raw—
The feck o' thae cronies are deid an' awa.

An' Donald the maister—a strappin' big chiel,
He cramm'd us wi' learnin' an' leather'd us weel,
An' though a guid maister, he kept us in awe,
But Time bringeth changes—he's deid an' awa.

An' back in thae days when I gaed on the street,
Kind auld-farrant buddies I often wad meet,
Wha spak' aye sae kin'ly an' speered for us a',
But a' thae kind buddies are deid an' awa.

An' weel I remember as if it was then,
Oor village was famous for ootstandin' men;
James Blackwood, the joiner, an' Begg, the big smith,
Wha wrocht at their callin' wi' smeddum an' pith.

Tam Gibson, the grocer, an' douce Baker Hogg,
Baith honest and thrifty, were aye on the gog,
An' Hugh Smith, the soutar, John Murdoch an' a';
They're labours are ended—they're deid an' awa.

An' twa or three ithers I brawly could name,
Wha brocht tae the village baith honour an' fame,
An' some wha kept chasin' Dame Fortune's bit ba',
But ere they could grasp it they slid tae the wa'.

Oor ancient auld village, like ither wee toons,
Had taw or three worthies wi' bees in their croons—
Mick Kelly, the ragman, lame Todd wi' his bell,
Wee Jimmie, the cobbler—a host in himsel'.

Then big Geordie Cringan, an' puir Eddie Begg,
An' Sugar Jock Russell, gey lang o' the leg,
Syne auld Jenny Washpig, Jock Collins an' a'—
They were God's special care, so he took them awa'.

THE AULD KIRKYAIRD

A' nature was in sweet repose;
The air was calm and still;
The sun was sinkin', set in gold,
Ayont the Whitehaugh hill;
The forest choir had ceased their sangs,
An' tae their nests repaired,
Ae e'enin' as I strayed within
The Clachan's auld kirkyaird.

In solemn mood I wandered roon'
The Clachan's sacred spot,
An' quately read the storied stanes
An' viewed each flowery plot
That loving hands had placed abune
Their kindred there interred,
For love an' grief aye bind us tae
The Clachan's auld kirkyaird.

For sadly missed anes gane afore
Lie sleepin' soun'ly here—
The babe, the bairn, the youth, the maid,
Tae mem'ry fondly dear.
An' here the parents kind and true,
Wha for thae children cared,
Lie sleepin' noo their lang, last sleep,
Within the auld kirkyaird.

In yonder wee sod-happit grave
An infant lies at rest,
Whom Death wi' cruel, ruthless hand,
Snatched frae its mither's breast;
A few short months sojournin' here
The great First Cause had given;
There's no a mortal less on earth—
An angel mair in heaven.

An' yonder gray gilt-lettered stane
Records a noble boy,
Wha was his lovin' faither's pride,
His mither's hope an' joy,

THE AULD KIRKYAIRD (Continued)

Destined to set the world agog
If God his life had spared;
Their hopes an' boy lie buried in
The Clachan's auld kirkyaird

An' faurer ower, a willow tree
Weeps o'er a maiden sweet,
Wha's footsteps lingered in the vale
Whaur brook an' river meet;
An' gowden gleams o' wakin' love
Shone in her soft brown eyes,
Her virgin form lies moulderin' here,
Her soul in Paradise.

An' over there a stately stane
A silent vigil keeps,
Ower whaur aneath the gowans bloom
A sainted mither sleeps,
Wha for her husband, bairns, an' hame
A life's love's-labour gave,
Then laid that life's love's-labour doon
Tae slumber in the grave.

But though that sainted mither's form
Lies moulderin' in the ground,
Her spirits mingle wi' the host
Wha compass us around,
An' o'er her mournin' orphan bairns
Keeps lovin' watch an' gaird:
Her spirit's maybe hoverin' noo
Abune the auld kirkyaird.

The tyrant Death, wi' ruthless power
Mak's nae distinction here,
He reckons not the orphan's cry
Nor heeds the parent's tear,
An' rank an' wealth he sets at naught—
The labourer an' the laird
Lie sleepin' quately side by side
Within the auld kirkyaird.

BURNS — 25th JANUARY, 1920

Frae far Australia's sunny shore
Tae fog-bound Northern Labrador—
In ev'ry land across the faem,
Where'er a Scotsman finds a hame,
This nicht his heart adorin' turns
Tae Scotland's bard—Immortal Burns.
'Tween John o' Groats, an' far Cathay
Soars high the strains o' 'Scots Wha Hae';
'Neath Indian palm, an' Northern pine,
Floats on the air his "Auld Lang Syne;"
An' a' the world this e'ening turns
Tae Scotland and her poet Burns.
Son of the soil, an' nature's child,
She taught him weel his woodnotes wild,
An' sent this message o'er the earth—
Behold a Scottish peasant's worth.
His woodnotes wild, wi' magic art,
Tune ev'ry string that moves the heart.
Gae view aul' Scotlan's hoary hills,
Her birken shaws, her wimplin' rills,
An' floo'ery meads, oor senses thrall;
His genious touched an' charmed them all.
An' Scotland, robed in beauty, turns
Tae greet her bard—Immortal Burns.
As lang's the sun shines in the sky
His "Scots Wha Hae" will never die;
As lang as men and maidens meet
His sangs o' love will aye be sweet;
As lang as Scotland claims a tongue
His lyric sangs will aye be sung;
As lang's the floo'er attracts the bee,
An' waters wimple tae the sea,
Or till her babe a mither spurns,
We'll never hae anither Burns

A TRIP TAE CAIRNTABLE (Continued)

Come on, then, Dave, I guess we'll strike
A bee-line tae yon lang stane dyke."
Its scanty biel' they scarce had gain'd
When, "Shades o' Noah," how it rained,
An' though I whiles exaggerate,
It is the truth I noo relate—
The rain cam' doon sae davert thick
Tam couldn' through it shove his stick,
Deed, in't ye could hae ca'd a nail
An' hung yer jaiket up for sale;
While waitin' till the shoo'er wad pass
Dave's rhymin' bump got up its gas,
An' wi' some introduction sighs
He staired thus tae moralise—
"Lo, when I watch the draps o' rain
Play pit-pat on that lang, grey stane,
An' makin' music o' a kin',
Some grand reflections cross my min';
What though up in the gurly sky,
The darksome clouds tha's driftin' by
Appear tae us as black as sin,
The darkest 'oor precedes day-licht,
An' as a drenchin' shoo'er gaes by
An' leaves a bricht an' sunny sky
So may war's shadows melt away
An' leave tae us a brichter day."
Tam listened quatly for a while,
Then mumbled wi' a watery smile—
"Gey guid man, Davie—a' tae heck
The blasted rain's gaun doon my neck,
But when I croulge here, cauld an' damp—
Oh dasht! my legs hae taen the cramp—
There's yae reflection fills my min'
An' ane is plenty o' the kin'—
That we hae jist oorsel's tae blame,
Or we'd be sittin' dry at hame."
By this the shoo'er had drifted by,
An' scads o' bue shone in the sky;
They up, an' on without a pause,
Doon by Rigen' an' Bankheid raws,
An' stervin', wearit, wat, an' lame
Like drookit craws they landit hame—
Bard Dave tae write a rhyme o' praise,
An' Tam tae clean his buits an' claes.

THE AULD KIRKYAIRD (Continued)

But, lo! the Bible tells us that
A glorious morn will dawn,
When cruel Death will loose his power
An' every grave will yawn,
An' we will rise tae taste the joys
Oor Maker has prepared,
Renewed and cleansed from our sleep
Within the auld kirkyaird

By this the sun had gaun tae rest;
Dark shadows gethered roon;
I passed in sadness through the gate
An' daunert doon the toon,
Resolved that in the time to come,
I'd pay a due regaird
Tae a' the lessons I had learned
Within the auld kirkyaird.

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NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO SAM NOBLE, AYR 1919—1920

Sam, seasons come, and seasons go,
With summer's sun and winter's snow,
While mirth and pleasure, grief and pain,
Co-mingling, follow in their train,
And thus through life we onward go—
One hour in weal, the next in woe.

But there's one thing I proudly claim,
In weal and woe is aye the same,
A tower of strength, till life shall end
That boon of boons—a genuine friend,
And God has gi'en tae Muirlan' Tam
A genuine friend in Noble Sam

MODERN RELIGION

Yae simmer nicht, tae pass an 'oor,
I daunert roon by the auld Blue To'er,
Syne up the glen tae Ferny Grove—
Where I a boy was wont tae rove;
There, resting on a grassy knowe
I watched the Garpel Water rowe;
Lulled by the murmur o' the stream,
I fell asleep and dreamed a dream—
That I was by a mighty hand
Transported tae a far-off land,
Where, on a certain Sabbath day,
Within a church I found my way;
There frae the shelter o' a pew
I keekit roon' an' had a view.
A group o' elders, prim, sedate,
Were stan'ing roon' the bawbee plate,
In biled sark-front an' clawtailed coat
They look't indeed a saintly lot;
But, bless me, even in a dream,
Some things are no aye what they seem,
For scarce an' elder stan'in there
Could "tak' the Book" or say a prayer.
Then, in my dream. I turned tae steal
A glance up at the preacher chiel,
And, lo, he was nae mair nor less
An A.M., D.B., A.S.S.,
Wha, wi' a learned-like hoast or twae,
Stuid up an' said "Friends, let us pray,"
Then leanin' ower the Bible brod
He thus commenced tae order God—
"Lord, gie me this, and gie me that,
I want the lean as weel's the fat,
Give all my blessings to my church,
An' leave a' ithers in the lurch."
Sae for a while wi' claspit han's
He voiced alood such big deman's,

A TRIP TAE CAIRNTABLE

An' in the valley nearer hand
Dame Nature wi' her fairy wand
Gies ev'ry hab, an' howe, an' plain
A rugged beauty o' its ain;
The fir-tree wud, an' birken shaw
Enfaulds the stately Wellwood Ha',
Where doon the valley, sweet an' fair,
In grandeur flows the classic Ayr—
Through Wellwood's vale it glides alang
A silver lining lies abune,
An' though oor boys are ower the sea,
An' by the war knockt a' agee,
An' coontless mithers weep an' murn
For sons wha never may return;
An' Bonnie Scotlan', like the shoo'er,
Is graplin' wi' her darkest 'oor;
We're tauld that in the darkest nicht
Where Hyslop toiled, an' loved an' sang,
An' musin' by the gurglin' stream
Invoked the visions o' his dream;
An' where Polwharnel's uplan's rise
The ruins o' Blawearie lies
That George McMurdo, bauld an' strong,
Immortalised in Scottish song;
Aul' Tibbie's Brig, her hoose an' a',
The Boilin' Well, the Coutburn Raw,
The Sanquhar Brig, the Garpel Glen
Hae a' been sung by local men,
So when I staun an' gaze aroun'
A', a', I see is classic grun'.
Get up then, Tam, and use yer een,
An' dae like me, enjoy the scene."
Tam grum'led oot, "I'm cauld, I shiver,
I doot a chill has grup't my liver,
My trooser legs are wat oot through,
Hoo then can I enjoy the view?
Forbye, the win', gey snell an' keen,
Brings blabs o' water tae my een,
But there's yae thing I plainly see
It's staunin' here we shouldna' be,
For look, the sky has overcast,
A drenchin' shoo'er approaches fast;

A TRIP TAE CAIRNTABLE (Continued)

An' then began to rhapsodise—
"By heckie, Tam, it's something gran'
Tae view the Scottish Martyrs' Ian',
Where Cameron, Brown, an' Adam trod,
An' sealed wi' bluid their faith in God,
On lone Air'smoss an' far Priesthill,
By Wellwood's brawlin' rock-bound rill,
Frae war an' strife they soun'ly sleep,
An' hoverin' angels ower them weep."
Tam—floundrin' through a deep mosshag—
Cried, "Tuits, man, Dave, yer tongue wull wag,
I only see a dreary clatt
O' deep bogholes, an' mud an' that,
In sprauchlin' through ye weel may guess
My claes are in a perfect mess,
An' like yer angels I cuid weep
Or groan like yonder braxied sheep;
The water's jorgin' in my buits
Wi' trauchlin' through the lang, wat spruits,
But though I'm clatty, wat, an' lame,
I'll shout Excelsior a' the same."
Sae up the hill they groaned an' peched—
The broth an' spuds was extra wecht—
In point o' age they werena' bairns,
Sae wabbit oot they reached the cairns.
They rallied up in coorse o' time,
Then Dave again began tae rhyme—
"Lo, when I stand an' look around,
A solemn awe, deep and profound,
Broods ower me as I gaze abroad
An' view the handiwork o' God;
'Way in the Sooth, infinite skill
Has limn'd the scene, wi' hill on hill,
Majestic Tinto in the East
For poets' een provides a feast;
Ower in the North, across the glen
Stauns Hareshaw, Law, an' Blacksidin'
An' in the distant sun-kissed west
Goatfell rears high his stately crest,
While Ailsa Craig an' Carrick hills
The background o' the picture fills,

MODERN RELIGION (Continued)

That when he strisseled aff the brod
I in my dream felt vexed for God;
An' a' the time he wagged his pate
His thochts were on the bawbee plate.
Then turnin' ower God's holy Book,
He from its leaves a paper took
An' spreadin' it aneath his han'
He then his day's "discoorse" began;
An' though wi' ardour deep imbued,
His een were on that paper glued,
An' if he raised them for a space,
Behold, his Reverence lost the place;
This left him speechless for a wee,
Because his wuts gaed a' agee
An' made him helpless as a wean
Until he fun' the place agane.
Then, like a lurcher on the scent,
Ower slaps and stiles away he went,
Though a' the time he never took
His nose ten inches aff the book,
Till, wi' a flourish grand-i-ose,
He brocht his sermon tae a close—
'Twas then I heard the angels weep,
An' hauf his hearers were asleep.
Next, in my dream I turned tae view
The sleepin' hearers in each pew,
An' lo, I saw without my spec.'s
They a' wore labels roon their necks,
Whereon was printed fair an' square,
The motives that had brocht them there—
Lo, some were there wi' spitefu' eyes
Their neebors dress tae criticise,
Some tae flaunt a braw new bunnet,
An' some tae pass opinions on it;
Some their sweethearts there tae meet—

MODERN RELIGION (Continued)

They found a pew a quiet retreat,
An' some were there tae shun a shoo'er,
Tae buy a whitewash for their sins,
An' knock "Auld Cloutie" aff his pins;
An' some tae spen' an idle 'oor;
Some tae plan an evening walk,
An' some tae sit, an' fidge, an' talk,
An' some were there wi' ae desire—
Tae sit an' hear an' judge the choir;
An' some tae tak' the preacher's size
An' a' his "sair bits" criticise,
An' some were there, as shair as fate,
Tae slip a button in the plate
An' some wha thocht it was genteel
Tae air abroad a pious zeal,
An' some were there tae scoff, but dod!
Gey few were there tae worship God.
Then as I turned, the choir tae hear,
A mighty voice smote on my ear,
An' cried in tones loud an' irate—
"Come oot o' that, yer in ma saite,"
An' lo! the spell that bound me broke,
An' from my slumbers I awoke.
If dreams be true, then I maun say,
In that far land each Sabbath day,
In chapel, pulpit, choir, an' pew,
They crucify our Lord anew.
Then as I hameward went my way,
I view'd the far-flung moorlan's gray—
Where, here an' there aneath the sod
The martyrs sleep, who died for God;
I sighed tae think such Faith had fled
An' left————— in its stead.

A TRIP TAE CAIRNTABLE or TWA SIDES TAE A PICTURE

INSCRIBED TAE D. MILLAR, AYR

Yae Sabbath day, no lang since syne,
Twa worthy chiels made up their min'
That though the day be wat or dry
Tae spiel Cairntable they wad try;
Resolvin' thus, the twa began
Tae fortify their inner man;
Baith healthy chaps, an' naething loth
They swall'd their kytes wi' guid Scotch broth,
An' meally spuds—near hauf a stane—
Nexy followed whaur the broth had gane,
An' though it looks gey like a lee,
Tae feenish up they had their tea.
Thus fortified, they sallied forth,
The win' was blawin' west by north,
It had been wat, but noo was dry
Though rain clouds still obscured the sky,
An' in the daimen scads o' blue
A watery sun was glintin' through.
When ower thw Ayr an' near the turn
Where stawns the fairm o' Al'sburn,
The chiel ca'd Dave bursts forth in rhyme,
An' cried, "Oh, Tam, this is sublime—
The winplin' burn, the bosky trees,
The changin' clouds, the bracin' breeze,
The music o' the rustlin' grain
Rejoicin' ower the mornin's rain,
Uprendin' frae the fertile sod
A hymn o' praise tae Nature's God
Wha rules an' gives the harvest time—
Oh Tam, Oh Tam, this is sublime."
Tam gied a growl, "Sublime, indeed,
I doot the broth has taen yer heid,
Yer aff yer nut, or something waur,
I only see coo dung an' glaur,
I'm wadin' in it ower the kuits
An' wastin' a' ma Sunday buits."
Then silence reigned, an' nocht wis sade
Until they reached the classic Lade,
Then Dave wi' bulgin', soulfu' een,
Stood on a knowe an' viewed the skies,

Cairntable Rhymes



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