

# LAYS OF THE HEATHER :

*P O E M S*

BY

A. C. MACDONELL.

*· A stir, a song, and a sigh.*

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Dedicated

TO

H.R.H. PRINCE RUPERT OF BAVARIA,

HEIR OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF STUART.

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## LOCHABAIR GU BRÀCH !'

(LOCHABER FOR EVER !)

IN all thy moods I love thee,  
In sunshine and in storm,  
Lochaber of the towering bens,  
Outlined in rugged form.  
Here proud Ben Nevis, snowy-crowned,  
Rests throned amid the clouds ;  
There Lochy's deep and silvery wave  
A royal city shrouds :  
Whose waters witnessed the escape  
Of coward Campbell's dastard shape,  
Disgrace eternal reap.  
Whilst fair Glen Nevis' rocks resound  
With Pibroch Donald dhu' renowned,  
From Inverlochy's Keep.  
Gray, ruined walls, in after years,  
That saw the great Montrose,  
Macdonell's, Cameron's men lead forth  
To victory 'gainst their foes.

*'Lochabair gu Bràch!'*

Oh, Lochaber! dear Lochaber!

The rich, red afterglow

Of fame that rests upon thy shield

Unbroken records show.

'Oh! Lochabair, mo Lochabair fhein gu bràch.\*'

Lochaber, on thy heather hills

The deeds of heroes rest;

Each name in Scottish annals famed

Found echo in thy breast.

Historic Keppoch, desert now,

Speak from thy ruined mound,

The days when Clavers, noblest chief,

Thine aid and shelter found;

Tell how the hot Macdonell blood,

Impetuous as the mountain flood,

The first for Charlie bled.

'Tis writ where high o'er Spean spans

The bridge where triumphed first the clans,

Scott's white horse captive led;

Where stately Spean, tumbling Roy,

Eternal requiems sing;

For those around whose honoured names

Both faith and honour cling.

Oh, Lochaber! dear Lochaber,

You've played a losing stake;

\* 'Oh, Lochaber! my own Lochaber for ever!'

But your failure, oh ! how greater !—

It was lost for honour's sake.

'Oh ! Lochabair, mo Lochabair fhein gu bràch.'

In all thy moods I love thee—

Thy far-off classic days,

When Ossian mused by dark Loch Treig,

The home of prisoned fays.

How green Strath-h-Ossian's fairy saw

The dark-eyed lad from Skye ;

His shapely limbs, his hunter's bow,

In wild confusion fly.

Around her grouped the timid fawns ;

Dilated fear upon them dawned,

They feel the snare,

As, graceful poised, with honeyed speech

The hunter strove the fay to reach.

Sweet fay, beware !

The antlered herd around her grouped,

With quiet and trustful eye ;

They knew their queen would ne'er condemn

Her loving friends to die.

Oh, Lochaber ! dear Lochaber,

Thy wooded glens and braes

Teem with the tales of chivalry

That tell of other days.

'Oh ! Lochabair, mo Lochabair fhein gu bràch.'

*'Lochabair gu Bràch !'*

In all thy moods I love thee ;  
     But I think I love thee best  
 When the moon is rising slowly  
     Behind Beinn Chlianaig's\* crest.  
 To list the plaintive owlet calling  
     When the woods are very still ;  
 The gentle splash of waters falling,  
     Chiming, rhyming, down the hill.  
 So rich with flowers the river braes,  
 Whose honeyed perfume scents the ways,  
     Sweet lingering on the air.  
 Wild purple bloom the heather shows,  
 O'er hanging rocks the rowan grows  
     Where scarce a foot may dare.  
 Enough it is among the braes  
     To dream, to breathe, to live,  
 With thy soul's repose of trustfulness,  
     Whate'er the future give.  
 Across the hazy distance  
     Thy children look and long,  
 For thy spell is found resistless,  
     And their hearts beat true and strong.  
 ' Oh, Lochabair ! mo Lochabair fhein gu bràch.' †

\* A mountain in Lochaber.

† The above poem was written for a historical work by Mr. Drummond Norrie, 'Old Lochaber,' and is reprinted by the author's permission.



## LOCHABER'S SONS.

(THE QUEEN'S OWN CAMERON HIGHLANDERS.)

FROM the depths of far Lochaber,  
Where the snow-clad crests on high  
Stand like sentries pointing upwards  
Towards the wild tempestuous sky,  
Where the oak's umbrageous shadow  
Interlacing shades a mile,  
Dark and cool, the fiercest sunshine  
Fails to pierce the dark defile ;  
Where the heather root is strongest,  
Growing past the height of man,  
Clothing all the hills and valleys,  
Badge of the Macdonald clan,  
There they stood when first embodied,  
Cameron and Clandonald's men ;  
Side by side, as many a foeman  
Found them, to defend their glen.

Proud on high they raised their colours,  
And the war-pipe pealed aloud,  
Echoing back from Achnacarry  
To the Keppoch hills around.  
E'en the tartan that they wore\*  
Bore witness to the ties of yore.

Side by side they fought together  
Thro' Egypt's fierce and stern campaign ;  
Side by side they marched together  
Thro' the sunny land of Spain.  
And they stood within the trenches,  
When young Alec Cameron fell,  
Pierced to death and sore surrounded,  
Rather than the French could tell  
That a Cameron's sword was yielded  
By a man who bore their name :  
Better death in all its phases  
Than the smallest taint of shame.  
Seven wounds were gaping open  
When they found him where he lay ;  
But he knew his picket rescued,  
And a smile seemed half to play,

\* Allan Cameron of Erracht's mother was a sister of the Keppoch of the '45, and she it was who designed the tartan of the 79th, a blending of the colours of the Macdonald and Cameron tartans.

Disdainful, as he'd mocked the Frenchmen,  
Falling, dying on the field.  
'On our hearts is writ a sentence,  
Thus—A Cameron ne'er can yield.'

They it was who charged the foemen,\*  
Bonaparte's selected guard ;  
What were they when matched in courage,  
Hand to hand in conflict hard,  
'Gainst the stubborn Highland soldiers,  
Trained by nature to endure,  
Forward rushing with one impulse,  
In their vengeance swift and sure ?  
For there rose a cry of anguish,  
In a hoarse and maddened yell,  
When the gallant Philip Cameron  
Backward on his charger fell.  
Then the soldiers clubbed their muskets,  
And they fought like men insane,  
Till the Frenchman paid his tribute  
For the life-blood of the slain.  
Early morn beheld them fighting,  
But the darkest shades of night  
Fell before their rage was sated,  
And the foe was put to flight.

\* At Fuentes d'Oñoro.

With muffled drums and arms reversed  
They laid their gallant chief to rest,  
To the wailing of the pibroch,  
With the colours on his breast.  
Crashed the roar of distant battle,  
Loud the thunder rolled o'erhead ;  
But the full and loyal tribute  
Had been paid their dear loved dead.

At the siege of Burgos, springing  
On each other's shoulders, formed  
Of their men a scaling ladder,  
Up the jagged rocks they stormed ;  
With the gallant Forty-second—  
Trusted comrades they of yore—  
O'er the palisades went streaming,  
Climbing, cheering, lifted o'er :  
To the strong redoubt went rushing,  
And La Colombette was won ;  
Levelled steel and shout of triumph  
Cheered the brave and dashing run.  
But a motive still more noble  
Led the dauntless Cameron men,  
When their comrades were surrounded,\*  
Caught like sheep within a pen,

\* A fresh body of French entering the redoubt drove the 42nd from it, who fell back on the 79th. Colonel Douglas, rallying the 79th, not only gained their former position, but that held by the 42nd. For this splendid action the gold cross was given him.

And they saw the Forty-second  
Driven from the post they'd ta'en ;  
Then the gallant Douglas shouted,  
    ' Rally, men ! your post regain !'  
Tho' the hill in front was darkened  
By the cavalry in flank,  
Fearless stood the Camerons waiting,  
Line on line in steady rank.  
Like the waves of stormy ocean  
Burst a loud tumultuous cheer,  
As the torrent rushed upon them,  
From the foemen flanked in rear.

Down they came, with bonnets waving,  
Carried like a wave of thought ;  
Then the Camerons cheered in answer,  
That with men indeed they fought.  
Hard they held their breath from rushing,  
As they sprang their foes to meet,  
Till the levelled steel was reddened  
And they forced them to retreat.  
Inch by inch they fought like tigers  
Till their own redoubt was gained,  
Reckless of the awful carnage  
And the tightened muscles strained,  
Till their comrades' post they carried ;  
Then the cheer of victory rose,

*Lochaber's Sons*

As they saw before them scatter  
The last remnant of their foes.  
When they saw the Douglas bearing  
On his breast the golden cross,  
Then the thrill of glory covered  
The dead heroes of their loss.  
It was they repulsed the Frenchmen  
In the valley of the Lanz ;  
They who formed the Highland Union,  
Wave on wave on Alma's banks.

As roe-deer reared within the forests,  
At Quatre Bras they bounded o'er,  
Graceful poised, with scarce an effort,  
The fifteen feet of bank before.  
Then their famous charge was driven  
Home to the advancing force ;  
Back upon the bridge they huddled  
The troopers of Napoleon's horse.  
Theirs the charge the guns to cover,  
Theirs to hold that dangerous post :  
Volley upon volley answered  
From the hedge the charging host ;  
Side by side they fought untiring,  
Back upon their column drove  
The pressing mass of horsemen falling  
That in vain for order strove.

When their shot gave out, retreating,  
Step by step in steady line,  
Till their square reformed and bristling,  
Showed the glistening bayonets' shine.  
Wild and high the pipes resounded  
From Mackay, who stepped without ;\*  
' *Cogadh no sith !* ' the soldiers answered,  
With a loud triumphant shout.  
Wild notes playing, streamers flying,  
Defiance to the foe was thrown ;  
Exposed, undaunted, marched the hero,  
Playing round the square alone.

From the depths of far Lochaber,  
Where the snow-crests point on high,  
Twine the heath and oak together  
For the deeds that cannot die.  
By sea or land, for Queen and country, †  
They have fought, and they have bled—  
Lochaber's sons, the true and dauntless,  
Fearless followed, fearless led.  
Spread abroad your dark-blue colours,  
The thistle ensigned with the crown,  
The Sphinx that tells of Egypt's glories,  
The battle-names of brave renown.

\* Piper Kenneth Mackay, a native of Tongue.

† ' *Per Mare, per Terras !* ' the motto of the Macdonalds. ' *Pro Rege et Patria !* ' that of the Camerons.

*Lochaber's Sons*

Gallant sons of brave Lochaber,  
Single in your greatness stand ;\*  
The triumph of your beauteous county,  
The pride of dear old Scotia's land.

\* The only single battalion in the British army. Colonel Cameron's memorable answer to the Duke of York's attempt to draft them was : ' You may tell the King, your father, from me, that he may send us to h—ll if he likes, and I'll go at the head of them, but *he daurna draft us !* '



‘THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE.’

ALMA.

FAR on the distant ridge the foe  
Pressed back the British, blow by blow ;  
Gallant resistance, rallying shout,  
Failed to regain the stormed redoubt ;  
Where shot and shell like hailstones rained,  
Hard on the short-lived victory gained.  
Massed were the Russians, flank and front,  
With heavy guns to bear the brunt ;  
Down from the hill the bullets fell,  
With enfilading fire as well ;  
And on the heights, ranged tier by tier,  
The world-famed horde of Vladimir.  
Behind, the batteries’ belching fire  
Caused death, and worse, confusion dire :  
Outnumbered—not with these the shame—  
An unsupported force the blame.

*'The Highland Brigade'*

East and West stood face to face,  
A moment's pause, a moment's grace ;  
Now came the crisis, now the hour  
To prove for each supremest power ;  
On the redoubt concentrated lay  
The point of vantage of the day.

Down in the vale the ' Highland Brigade,  
Steady, stood ready, as on parade.

Strong lithe limbs and flashing eyes  
The fiery Northern race betrayed,  
Where deep the hope of victory lies :  
Men who had never known defeat,  
Wild to be led their foes to meet.

Proudly their leader's heart beat high—  
He knew each man would do or die !

Their manly bearing, eager zeal,  
With perfect discipline comply.

The firm-knit frames, like tempered steel,  
High waving plumes and pictured dress,  
Left on their foes a dread impress.

Close by his right the men he knew,  
The stately ranks of the ' Freiceadan dubh ' ;\*

Proven in many a hard won fight,  
Wide on the breeze their colours flew.

Splendid their record, glorious the sight,

\* Black Watch.

The ranks of the Hackle Red that day  
Impatient and eagerly waiting the fray.

Beyond stood their comrades, the Ninety-third,  
Fresh, with the fever of battle stirred ;

Eager to rashness, the strong, firm hand  
Held them in check by a single word,

Though chafing at fever-heat they stand.  
Dearly Sir Colin loved and prized  
Dauntless courage so undisguised.

Next came the gallant Cameron men—  
Lads from the snow-clad hill and glen ;

Lochaber axes sharp and keen,  
Heather and oak from the topmost ben,

With the sun on the glistening bayonet sheen.  
In their haughty bearing they bore the trace  
Of Macdonald and Cameron's fighting race.

Short the address Sir Colin made—

'Now make me proud of my Highland Brigade.

We'll have nane but Highland bonnets here !'

Brought forth from the men a ringing cheer.

Sharp and clear as a silver bell,

'Forward the Forty-second !' fell.

The great war-pipe blew loud and shrill

Out to the far Kourgané hill,

*'The Highland Brigade'*

Straight thro' the Alma's narrow stream  
Marching with pointed bayonets' gleam,  
Majestic they gained the crested height,  
With the sweep of the golden eagle's flight.  
A moment's pause, a moment's rest,  
Martial ardour burning each breast.  
To meet them down came the Kazans fierce,  
With Vladimir's men, their ranks to pierce.  
Steady, the Highlanders firing advance—  
A slender line 'gainst a heavy chance ;  
Whilst slowly crept to attack their flank  
The heavy left of the Soudal rank.

Fierce and raging, the Ninety-third,  
By superior numbers undeterred,  
Saw from the crest the likely crash,  
And headlong prepared a downward dash.  
Sir Colin's hand their fire restrained,  
As hounds in leash by force detained ;  
Tho' a flying shot his charger sped,  
Ordered a halt, till steadier led.  
Then 'Forward !' was heard thro' the battle's crush,  
The Sutherland men to the rescue rush,  
In silence together, as if in sport,  
Save for the rifles' sharp report ;  
Swayed the plumes and swung the kilt,  
Comrades in arms like giants built ;

Till, seized with superstitious dread,  
In nameless fear the Russians fled,  
Believing some denizens straight from hell  
Let loose on their frenzied columns fell.

Now the right Soudal battalion strong,  
Swift to their aid the struggle prolong ;  
Nerved to fresh hope, their courage rose ;  
Behind, their countrymen sure would close,  
Till, like a scrap of paper rolled,  
The Highlanders' flank would quickly fold.  
Yet did their evil genius wield  
Some power to cause the earth to yield?  
Line upon line in beauty weird,  
The Cameron men on the hill appeared !  
Like their own agile mountain roe,  
Clear on the pointed crest they show ;  
Graceful the sporrans gently swayed,  
With every bounding step they made ;  
Up from the hill, kilted and plumed,  
Sprung on the Russian columns doomed,  
'Caught in their black and daring sin,  
Attempting a Highlander's flank to win.'  
Till, shivering with unspoken dread,  
Contagious fear like fever spread ;  
And, from each flying Russian pale,  
Rose a low and despairing wail !

*'The Highland Brigade'*

The gray massed hordes far distant stole,  
As mists upon the mountains roll ;  
The crisis past, the victory won,  
Proudly they stood, their duty done.  
Sir Colin's hand in signal raised,  
Called for the cheers of victory praised.  
High o'er the din of cannon rose  
A shout the flying Russians froze,  
The allied troops of Europe thrilled,  
And far the slopes of Alma filled ;  
Strong, lusty shouted triumph rung,  
And round the hurrying columns clung ;  
Thrice came the answering Highland cheer,  
'We had nane but Highland bonnets here !'  
There, covered with glory, stood arrayed  
The gallant lads of the Highland Brigade !

## THE BONNIE SCOTS GREYS.

(SECOND TO NONE.)

‘SCOTLAND for ever!’—hark! it is ringing  
Down the long vista of echoing years;  
Shrill and triumphant, the cavalry trumpet  
Sounds ‘to the charge’ amid deafening cheers.  
‘Sensere gigantes’\*—the giants have felt it,  
Jove’s thunder falls powerless on Scotia’s shield;  
The pride of a nation, untouched by a foeman,  
The white standard bearer to Scotland must yield.  
Hurrah for the lads of the white plume and thistle!  
Their fame lives for aye in the deeds they have done;  
Where danger lies thickest, and stout hearts are needed,  
Look there for the lads who are ‘Second to None.’

‘Scotland for ever!’—grey steed and sabre,  
Flash as the foam on a storm-beaten rock;

\* At Dettingen the ‘Greys’ captured from the French the famous white standard, bearing in the centre a thunderbolt, with the motto ‘Sensere Gigantes!’

Back, driven back, on their haunches the Frenchmen,

Tremble and reel 'neath the terrible shock.

Fight for the standard, brave son of the mountains,\*

The Waterloo eagle is linked with thy name ;

More leaves for the laurel entwining the standard,

Already o'erweighted with Scotia's fame.

Hurrah for the lads of the white plume and thistle—

The lads of ' the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee '!

Long may they flourish, our pride and our glory,

For the dread of our foes are ' the de'ils o' Dundee. '

' Scotland for ever !—the Greys to the rescue !'—

Long shall the Frenchmen remember the cry ;

They were two thousand, the Gordons two hundred, †

Charged them with bayonet, to conquer or die.

Oh ! the wild dash they made, gray steed and tartan,

Hand on the stirrup, and face to the foe ;

' Scotland for ever !' the French columns scattered,

As trees are borne down by a torrent in flow.

\* During the retreat to Waterloo, Sergeant Ewart of the Greys captured the eagle of the 45th French Infantry, immortalized in art as ' The Fight for the Standard. '

† At Waterloo the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, reduced to two hundred, charged at the point of the bayonet a body of French two thousand strong. As they advanced the Scots Greys galloped up in support, whereupon the Highlanders, unwilling to be left behind, laid hold of the Greys' stirrups and assisted themselves forward. Both regiments joined simultaneously in the shout of ' Scotland for ever !'



Hurrah for the lads of the white plume and thistle,  
Resistless in battle, or love's gentle charms !  
Long shall the land that so proudly hath borne them  
Ring with the tale of the brothers-in-arms.

' Scotland for ever !' grey steed and scarlet,  
The clank of the spur, and the tuck of the drum ;  
' Second to None ' in their dash and their finish,  
Welcome our gallants wherever they come.  
On guidon and sabretache see the French eagle,  
The grey steed clasped fast on the bearskin behind ;  
On stirrup or saddle, where'er the eye glances,  
Some record of valour be sure you may find.  
Hurrah for the lads of the white plume and thistle !  
Their fame lives for aye in the deeds they have done ;  
Honour and welcome to Scotia's darlings,  
The bonnie Scots Greys who stand ' Second to None. '\*

\* The above poem has been set to music by Signor A. Mascheroni, and is reprinted by the permission of the publishers and copyright owners, Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co., London.

## ‘THE THIN RED LINE.’

(THE 93RD HIGHLANDERS AT BALACLAVA.)

A SMILE lit up Sir Colin's face,  
The ranks with martial ardour stirred ;  
Clear, resonant, the order came—  
‘ Advance, the Ninety-third !’  
The flower of Russian chivalry  
Was theirs to hold in check ;  
The strong, brave troopers of the Czar,  
Who rode in neck by neck.  
‘ That thin red line of Gaelic rock,  
Just tipped with rows of steel,’  
Answered with long and steady stride  
Their own loved pipes' appeal.  
‘ Remember, men, there's no retreat,  
That where you stand, there you must die !’  
‘ Aye, aye, Sir Colin, if needs be,’  
The ‘ Reismaid Chataobh's ’\* brave reply.

\* The Sutherland Regiment.

'Sans Peur' they bore upon their crest,  
Proven in many a fierce contest.

Onwards they came, the ground beneath  
    With shock of cavalry resounds ;  
Convulsive throes of earth torn up,  
    With sand and stones in air rebounds.  
Sparks of fire and sparks of passion  
    From ringing hoofs in frenzy fly,  
As the stubborn Russian soldiers  
    Sweep the hill with flashing eye.  
Wild the chargers of the Cossack,  
    Swift and sure the Ukraine breed ;  
Gathering length, and strength of motion,  
    Steadier in increasing speed.  
Those long, lean, hardy Muscovites,  
    Enduring, patient, strong,  
One perfect wave of horsemanship,  
    Triumphant dashed along  
As a tidal wave rolls onward  
    Ere the first recoiling shock  
Breaks impotent in its anger  
    'Gainst a wall of solid rock.

Unmoved, the Highlanders stood firm,  
    As still as classic forms engraved,  
Save that the eager breath came short,  
    And the feather bonnets gently waved.

The thundering hoofs came near and near,  
Out rang the Minié guns!—  
Too soon the line of steel went down\*  
From Scotia's hot, impetuous sons.  
Then upward curled the bearded lips,  
The Russians smiled derisive scorn;  
Hold fast! hold fast! proud Muscovite,  
Ere Russia's sable bear is shorn.  
'They're doomed! they're doomed!' the watchers cry,  
Oh, rash and daring deed!  
Had they but formed four deep perhaps†  
They might resist such speed.  
With bated breath and anxious eye  
Fixed on the steep incline,  
They saw, to oppose a Russian charge,  
Nought but 'a thin red line!'

Down poured the Russian cavaliers,  
With loosened rein and savage frown;  
But ere the shout of victory rose,  
The front rank, horse and man, went down.

\* The 93rd fired a volley on the Russians at a distance of six hundred yards, which failed to check the charge.

† Sir Colin Campbell met the Russians in line, disdaining to form his Highlanders even four deep to resist a cavalry charge.

Dismayed, they formed again and charged,  
    Out rang one volley more :  
And every shot that Scotia sent,  
    For Russia's sons a missive bore.  
Again, again, they form, they charge,  
    That line of steel they dare not pass ;  
As well might surging seas essay  
    To break the bulwarks of the Bass.  
And, if a kindly Scottish heart  
    Was stilled, no moan betrayed,  
As those pressed ranks the closer drew  
    The gap his absence made.  
But, ere the hard-held post was won,  
    Shoulder to shoulder stood  
The comrades who avenged his loss  
    In streams of Russian blood.

Oh ! many a gallant deed was done,  
    Proved Britain's sons for courage famed  
But foremost on the list stands out,  
    When Balaclava's fight is named,  
The narrow ridge, the desperate charge,  
    Where kilted heroes stood that day ;  
The waving plumes, the glittering steel,  
    That held the Muscovites at bay.

Well may the flag of gold unfold,  
Well may the Lion rampant shine,  
When Scotland celebrates the day  
That saw her glorious 'thin red line'!\*

\* The above poem has been set for musical recitation by Mr. Stanley Hawley, and is reprinted by the permission of the publishers and copyright owners, Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co., London.

## THE PASSAGE OF THE GARE.

(‘BYDAND.’)

COLD ran the swift and swollen Gare,  
Fierce stormed the cannonade ;  
With might and main upon the bridge,  
Ceaseless destruction played.  
Upon the right bank ranged the French,  
The British on the left ;  
Before them saw their only mode  
Of passage almost cleft.  
What mortal man could do or dare,  
In danger’s hour, stood ready there—  
The lads who on their colours bore  
‘The Passage of the Nive!’  
Then spake the gallant Cameron,  
Who led the Gordon men :  
‘Lads, we have stemmed a colder stream  
In many a snow-clad glen.

*The Passage of the Gare*

Say, was the wild and foaming Spey  
In cold December's frost  
Less chill when following far the stag,  
Ere Laggan's Loch he cross'd ?  
Deem but the bristling guns' report  
The hounds that bay t' invite the sport.  
Forward, my lads ! Yon armèd shore  
Of croaking frogs relieve.'

As sunshine ripples o'er a stream,  
The light, derisive laughter ran.  
Well did they read brave Cameron's thought ;  
He knew and trusted every man.  
Had they held back with valiant Moore  
In Egypt's fierce campaign ?  
There waved the colours that they bore  
Throughout the length of Spain !  
Then tighter drew each man his belt,  
For broadsword or for bayonet felt ;  
Flashed gleams of shining steel on high,  
Ready to conquer or to die !

Dark ran the cold and sullen Gare,  
Treachorous the currents lay ;  
Nor foeman's steel nor icy stream  
The Highland blood could stay.



Hissing around them shot and shell  
From musket and artillery fell ;  
The seething waters round them rose  
With high and heavy swell.  
Shoulder to shoulder through the wave,  
Steadily held each Gordon brave,  
Till on the startled foemen burst  
The skirl of pipes, the bayonet-thrust !

As autumn winds the forest leaves  
Drive with the rising blast,  
As sheep upon the mountain-side  
Huddle in terror past,  
Not deeper in the snowdrift lay  
Than lay the heaped-up dead ;  
Not surer than the shrivelled leaves  
The scattered Frenchmen fled !  
Back from the town, back from the bridge,  
With flashing steel and crimson brow ;  
Chased far beyond the outposts' ridge,  
The passage freed ! Pass, soldiers, now !

Linked with the name 'Arriverette,'  
Twined with the laurel crown,  
Brave Cameron bore upon his shield  
That glorious day's renown.

*The Passage of the Gare*

Long, long the list of honours borne  
    Upon the Gordons' scroll,  
The dangers of the Pyrenees  
    Not least upon the roll.  
The double charge, the double praise  
Earned by the Gordons and the Greys ;  
The Afghan War, the dark defile,  
The hurried passage of the Nile !

Brave and firm are the Gordon lads,  
    Their hearts as true as steel ;  
In danger's hour their country's cause,  
    Their country's fame reveal.  
Cocks of the North, raised by a kiss,\*  
    On the summit of fame they crow ;  
These are the lads who never yet  
    Have turned their backs on a foe.  
Next to the passage of the Rhine  
    ( None but a Scot might dare )  
Come the gay and gallant Gordon lads  
    In the ' Passage of the Gare !'

\* The Dukes of Gordon were called ' Cocks of the North.' The beautiful Duchess of Gordon in many instances gained recruits for the Gordons by the bribe of a kiss.

THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS IN  
HINDOOSTAN.

*' Cabar Feidh.'*

THE STORMING OF BANGALORE.

FEW were the words their leader spake : as he glanced  
along the line  
He saw in the looks of his Highland men the fever of  
battle shine.  
High o'er the dizzy heights the fort\* of Tippoo Sahib  
gleamed,  
Whose ramparts, circled round with light, far o'er the city  
streamed ;  
Muskets and pointed bayonets' sheen, and the rattle of  
burnished guns,  
Showed where the storming-party lay, the pick of Scotia's  
sons.

\* The Pettah of Bangalore.

32 *The Seaforth Highlanders in Hindoostan*

Darker and darker fell the shades across the Pettah  
wall ;  
The northern warriors eager strained to hear the signal  
call ;  
The pipers' fingers mutely played the march of 'Cabar  
Feidh,'\*  
For well they knew the kilted lads would lead the upward  
way.  
Three guns in quick succession rung ;  
'To arms' the Seaforth gallants sprung.  
Out they rushed from the covered way, in a sheet of  
deadly fire,  
The hurrying troops upon the breach mount higher still  
and higher ;  
Proudly the feather bonnets waved, and the silver antlered  
head  
Bright on the stalwart shoulders glanced where first the  
Seaforths led,  
With wild huzzas of conquering men who never yet have  
failed,  
Sure-footed as the mountain stag the swaying ladders  
scaled ;  
The cheering sound of beating drums, the soldiers' shout  
of joy,  
Triumphant sweep the ramparts round and Tippoo's power  
destroy.

\* Pronounced as if spelt 'Fay.'

Down went the alien flag, a strip of crimson silk\* was  
there,  
The colours of the lion rampant floating free on air :  
The foremost up the breach that day  
The hardy sons of 'Cabar Feidh.'

SAVENDROOG.

O'ER the giddy heights of Savendroog the kilt and sporrán  
swung,  
The first to dare the steep descent by jagged peaks o'er-  
hung ;  
The first the dread ascent to gain, three hundred feet *en*  
*face*,  
Climbing the perilous rock by dint of tufts of slippery  
grass.  
Then burst the belching batteries forth, where shot and  
shell betrayed  
Within the fort the dusky hordes, by British pluck dis-  
mayed.  
' Britons, strike home !' Then charged the host, heroic  
ardour burned  
Within each breast, whose muskets' sheen no dusky  
warrior turned.

\* Lieutenant Duncan of the 71st pulled down the flag and put his own sash in its place.

Where danger's post was carried first, the Seaforths last  
were seen,

And 'Cabar Feidh' the pipers played for the lads in tartan  
green.

No life was lost ; e'en death refrained

To mar the glorious victory gained.

THE GATES OF OUTRA-DURGUM.

NOT ended yet the Seaforths' task, before them Outra-  
Durgum lay,

Though scarce two suns had set to rest in the arms of  
dying day.

No need to wait for granted leave,\* the soldiers rushed  
the wall ;

Though fast the gate, the Celtic fire doomed that the fort  
should fall ;

The ladders with the pioneers dashed over quick as  
thought ;

The second wall, the second gate, the dauntless Seaforths  
fought,

Forcing with shoulders squared a way, through bolts and  
bars they burst,

Until the narrowing pathway stemmed th' advancing  
bayonet-thrust.

\* Lieutenant McInnes applied for leave to storm the first gate. Captain Scott deemed the enterprise impracticable ; but the soldiers, hearing the request made, and not doubting of consent being given, rushed towards the wall, followed by McInnes.

Too late the Colonel's order sent the dangerous slopes to  
leave,

The seeming check the Highland blood, the Highland  
wit relieve.\*

Hand over hand the ladders came, five walls to  
escalade ;

Then 'Forward, lads!' no danger yet the Seaforth lads  
dismayed.

Two companies of Highland men alone the fortress took,  
Which to its lowest depths the fame of Tippoo Sahib  
shook.

Dauntless still in valour shone the kilted lads in the  
fight,

The last decisive victory gained,† through the long and  
weary night ;

Fierce white sheets of lurid flame, muskets and rockets  
rent

The holy calm of Eastern night, o'er heated battle  
bent ;

Disturbed, the echoing hills sent back each shout of mad  
delight,

As o'er the nullah rushed the foe, pursued by Highland  
might.

\* Lieutenant McPherson forced his way through the crowd,  
causing the ladders to be handed over the soldiers' heads, before  
the Colonel's order could be delivered.

† Seringapatam.

36 *The Seaforth Highlanders in Hindoostan*

Nine times the gallant Seaforths charged, successful  
    'gainst the foe,  
And twice the swollen river crossed in flush of heavy  
    flow ;  
The current claimed its victims there, of gallant men and  
    true,  
But forward still their comrades went, and forced a  
    passage through ;  
And victory held the laurel wreath above the noble  
    slain,  
Where early morn the tartan kissed for someone's sake  
    again.

What they have done in years gone by, should need arise  
    to claim,  
The steady arm, the dauntless heart, would conquer just  
    the same.  
Witness the march to Candahar, the desperate Afghan  
    war,  
Where many a gallant Seaforth lad from home is sleeping  
    far ;  
Asmai heights, whose records tell the deeds of daring  
    done,  
Where gallant Sellars'\* bravery the cross of valour  
    won.

\* Sergeant Sellars, 1st Battalion Seaforths.



Look to the keen eyes' sparkle, as the ranks go sweep-  
ing by,  
That speaks the Highland heart within to conquer or  
to die;  
With the Scottish colours flying from the pipers as they  
play  
The march that leads to victory the men of 'Cabar  
Feidh.'

## THE RUSH ON COOMASSIE.

(AM FREICEADAN DUBH.)

AT last the order, long delayed,  
Came for the Forty-second's aid ;  
Where Ordashu beheld the fray  
Check for a space the British sway.  
And they had passed the deadly fire,  
Dared hidden foes and perils dire ;  
Had made the jungle echoes ring,  
And back the pealing war-notes fling,  
Inspiring as the salt sea spray  
Felt on a hot and toilsome day.  
Where smoke betrayed the foe's retreat  
Poured in a volley's deadly sheet ;  
The 'Freiceadan dubh '\* of the hackle red,  
By clan Chattan's† gallant chieftain led,

\* Black Watch.

† Major D. MacPherson of Cluny.

Sore wounded, limp through jungle thick,  
His only aid a birchwood stick.  
And in their ranks the Camerons stood,  
In equal glory shed their blood ;  
Through Egginassie, Amoaful,  
Had fought their way with courage cool.  
Forward ! though blood poured down like rain ;  
Forward ! though wounded sore in pain ;  
The glorious roll of heroes swell  
Where men at every footstep fell.

Brave MacLeod surveyed his men,  
Sadly reduced in numbers then ;  
Three hundred and forty on that day  
Stood up in proud and calm array.  
Ever in front when battles lour,  
Ever in danger's darkest hour ;  
Where the strongest hand has failed,  
And the bravest spirit quailed,  
The Highland lads their powers reveal  
In daring charge and shock of steel.  
The eagle eye, undaunted brow,  
Showed them as ever ready now ;  
As steel to flint strikes sparks of fire,  
Trust in each other both inspire.  
Fit leader of the ' Freiceadan dubh,'  
Those stately ranks both tried and true ;

*The Rush on Coomassie*

Drawn up in ranks of double file,  
Waiting their leader's word the while.  
Concise and brief the orders made,  
Scarce raised, as if on home parade ;  
No added words or waste of breath  
For men who follow to the death.  
' Companies firing in volleys, advance !  
Forward, my lads ! now is your chance !'

Out from the village street they went,  
Gaily as men on pleasure bent.  
' Company A, fire to the right,  
Rear rank to the left,' the Colonel said.  
Into the depth of the forest shade,  
Into the gloom of the chasm made,  
Into the ambush of deadly night,  
In, 'midst a crashing flare of light ;  
Quick in response a volley burst,  
With deadly aim the foemen curst ;  
High o'er the din the pipers blew,  
The hardy Scots marched two by two ;  
No halt, no pause, the swinging pace  
Lost not an atom's form of grace.  
The keen eyes' sparkle, lusty cheer,  
Struck ambuscades with deadly fear.  
What men were these, whose volleys flew  
From right to left, then lost to view ?

Nor gave one backward glance, disdain  
Forbidding thoughts of passing pain.  
Though death and darkness round them clung,  
Shoulder to shoulder on they swung.

In front where dusky forms appear  
Down went the steel 'gainst levelled spear ;  
Behind the Ashantees were left,  
As forest trees by lightning cleft.  
The ripping sound of Sniders rung,  
The deep Artillery gun gave tongue,  
But 'twas the Highland spirit gave  
The lead audacious, calm, and brave.  
' Lads, we enter Coomassie to-night,'  
The Colonel said, for he read aright  
The conquering eye and the answering smile  
Of his trusted lads through the dark defile.  
Discordant sounds soon rent the air,  
The horns blew loud in last despair ;  
Useless resistance, coward flight  
Foretold the victory won that night.  
One bravely reckless Celt\* went on  
Bounding with eager steps alone,  
A target for a hundred guns,  
Keen as a hound on scent he runs ;

\* Thomas Adams.

The first the city walls to sight,  
With shout of unrestrained delight.

The shades of night lay moist and chill,  
Flushed with success the soldiers thrill ;  
Villages ta'en, triumphant passed,  
Till there Coomassie lay at last,  
Yet silent as the sleeping dead ;  
They found the beaten foe had fled.  
A few stood by in dumb dismay  
Before the serried ranks' array,  
Drawn up in line, with thundering sound  
Of cheers that made the air resound,  
Brave remnant of the glorious few  
Whose dead like leaves the forest strew.  
Hard had they fought, hard had they bled,  
Nor grudged their brave and glorious dead ;  
Bearing the heat of the battle's brunt,  
Ever in danger, ever in front ;  
Harvest of gold, harvest of death,  
Rushing out with the last best breath,  
Fit heroes they of the snow-wreathed clime,  
Whose deeds had made the hour sublime !  
  
'Freiceadan dubh !'—Forward's the word,  
When ranks give way with hope deferred ;  
Weak, wavering, turn in wild dismay,  
Where shot and shell destructive play.

Forward ! the lads of the plumed array,  
There Britain's hope, there Britain's stay.  
Up and at them, there's work to be done ;  
Up and at them, the victory won !  
As in days of old with broadsword and targe,  
Hurrah ! the wild shock of a Highland charge !  
'Freiceadan dubh, an gualainn a cheile !'\*

\* Black Watch, shoulder to shoulder.

## A SOLDIER'S VOW.

THE 78TH HIGHLANDERS AT THE WELL OF CAWNPORE.

*'Cuidich'n Righ.'*

SILENT the Highland soldiers stood, with bared and  
reverent head ;  
No word they spake, no prayer they said, beside the  
murdered dead ;  
With flashing eyes and knitted brows, and bursting hearts  
of pain,  
They'd sought in all that butchered town one living  
thing—in vain.  
Was it for this they bore the brunt of India's sweltering  
heat ?  
Was it for this they fought and bled, and toiled with  
aching feet—  
O'er desert sands, 'neath scorching suns, weary, athirst,  
and faint,  
Had borne the long and tedious march, nor uttered one  
complaint ?



Men who had faced the cannon's mouth and never thought  
to quail,  
Men who had charged and silenced them 'mid bullets'  
rattling hail ;  
They who had seen their foes go down like bent and  
broken reeds,  
Line upon line as ripened corn before the scythe  
recedes ;  
They who had watched unmoved their dead strewn on  
the battle-ground,  
Nor gave one sign of grief, save in a volley's quickened  
round,  
Before that cursèd work of hell broke down and sobbed  
aloud,  
And for the victims of that well their oath of vengeance  
vowed.

Then rose a veteran soldier, spake in accents brief and  
stern,  
His visage pale, his deep set eyes through humid lashes  
burn ;  
With gesture fierce he dashed aside the hot and scalding  
tear—  
The first his hardy manhood shed for many a long long  
year.  
' Up, comrades, up ! is this a time for men to weep or  
rave,  
When living voices cry for aid from out a living grave ?

Could tears give back our murdered dead, or spare one  
dying groan,  
Our very blood had turned to salt ere deeds like these  
were shown.  
But sound instead the slogan's peal, and beat the loud  
alarm,  
For we have need of strength of heart and manhood's  
strength of arm :  
Then let your claymore's edge be keen, and let your aim  
be sure,  
And brace your hardy sinews up in patience to endure  
The hurried march, the weary leagues, that yet before  
you lie,  
And think at every step you hear their blood for vengeance  
cry.'

From out his breast he drew with care a tress of long  
bright hair,  
The only relic left of one they knew both good and fair.  
' Now, by the vow of chivalry that binds each Scottish  
hand,  
And by the earliest breath ye drew on that far distant  
land :  
By every jagged mountain peak, by every tree that  
waves,  
By every blade of grass that grows green on our fathers'  
graves,

Take every man his portion out, till each separate golden  
thread

Is laid upon a soldier's heart, that grew on that young  
head.

Shoulder to shoulder! Highland men, up with the  
claymore's point,

And pray yon distant heaven above your trusty blades  
anoint!

For you have sworn a holy vow, and ta'en a sacred trust,  
God bless your flashing eyes afire! God bless the  
bayonet-thrust!

And guard the gallant band that's bound for Lucknow's  
brave relief,

Where kindred lives in perils dire await in fear and grief.'

Then leapt from every ready sheath the flash of glittering  
steel,

As on the blood-stained earth the rows of kilted soldiers  
kneel;

Uplifted in each strong right hand, the claymore's flashing  
gleam

Played in the Eastern sunlit rays like some bright  
mountain stream;

No wavering nerve the steady glint of that brave phalanx  
shook,

As loud and deep in sonorous tones their soldier's vow  
they took.

' For every shining golden thread of that bright severed  
hair,

A dusky rebel life shall pay in wild and deep despair.'

Nor deem those hardened hearts that kissed with tears  
the silken tress,

And vowed a woman's bitter wrongs their manhood  
should redress ;

In true-born Scottish heart is found weak woman's surest  
shield—

' Lambs in their quiet domestic life, but lions in the  
field.'

How did they keep their sacred vow, that hardy Northern  
band ?

How fight their desperate way, how keep their gallant  
stand ?

The Charbagh bridge, the Kaiserbagh, their last and  
hard-won fight,

Fought inch by inch from early dawn to deepest shades  
of night ;

Through ranks of death they cut their way, shoulder to  
shoulder still,

At every forward step they made their sacred vows fulfil ;

With ringing cheers that spake to those long waiting  
hearts at last,

' They come, they come, the kilted lads ! Thank God !  
the pipers' blast.'

Yet of the gallant spirits there who'd knelt by Cawnpore's  
well,  
Upon a dozen conquered fields a third in combat fell.

The gates are wide, the conquerors come with hoarse and  
broken cheers,  
And hands clasp brother hands across a misty veil of  
tears.

God bless the waving tartan plaids, the Highland hosts  
are in,

And loud and clear the slogan's peal rung o'er the  
cannon's din.

The bravest of the brave were they from Northern hill  
and glen,

In broken ranks that told too well their loss in dauntless  
men.

Where every man a hero stood no separate deed was  
best,

So they pinned the cross of valour on one chosen  
comrade's breast

Whilst they named the whole battalion for deeds of  
bravery done,

As every kilted soldier there Victoria's cross had won.

The proudest meed of courage that ever has been  
known

Was given a Highland regiment in the cross on all  
bestown.

## THE LAD WITH THE BONNET OF BLUE.

WHAT are you dreaming of, laddie, laddie—  
Lad with the bonnet of blue ?  
With never a glance to the right or the left  
For the eyes that are following you.  
Thy light step follows the sound of the drum,  
As gaily the bandsmen play ;  
But the spirit that looks from those dreamy eyes  
Is many a mile away.

What are you dreaming of, laddie, laddie—  
Lad with the bonnet of blue ?  
Is it a sweetheart you've left behind,  
In Scotia's land so true ?  
Is the castle you build to the martial strain,  
Only a castle in Spain ?  
Remember that music and dreams must fade,  
Leaving a lingering pain.

Whom do you mind me of, laddie, laddie—

Lad with the bonnet of blue?

Of one whom I saw so handsome and gay,

A soldier lad that I knew.

The band was playing, the day was fair,

When they marched my laddie away ;

He had the self-same look in his eyes,

Lad, that you wear to-day.

What are you dreaming of, laddie, laddie—

Lad with the bonnet of blue ?

Out of a little white speck in the sky

Many a storm-cloud grew.

With thy dreamy eyes and thy waving hair,

Feather and tartan gay,

You have sent my thoughts far over the seas

To a town that is built on a bay.

What is he dreaming of, laddie, laddie—

My lad with the bonnet of blue ?

I'd give the best gift that lay in my power

Could I but his thoughts bestrew.

I'd give the best gift that lay in my power

To hear but the welcome strain

Of the drums that are beat on a homeward march,

And to see his dear face again.

## THE WEAVING OF THE TARTAN.

I SAW an old dame weaving,  
    Weaving, weaving—  
I saw an old dame weaving  
    A web of tartan fine.  
'Sing high,' she said, 'sing low,' she said,  
    'Wild torrent to the sea,  
That saw my exiled bairnies torn  
    In sorrow far frae me.  
And warp well the long threads,  
The bright threads, the strong threads ;  
Woof well the cross threads,  
To make the colours shine.'

She wove in red for every deed  
Of valour done for Scotia's need ;  
She wove in green, the laurel's sheen,  
In memory of her glorious dead.



She spake of Alma's steep incline,  
The desert march, the 'thin red line';  
It fires the blood and stirs the heart,  
Where'er a bairn of hers takes part.  
'Tis for the gallant lads,' she said,  
'Who wear the kilt and tartan plaid ;  
'Tis for the winsome lasses too,  
Just like my dainty bells of blue.  
So weave well the bright threads,  
The red threads, the green threads ;  
Woof well the strong threads  
That bind their hearts to mine.'

I saw an old dame sighing,  
Sighing, sighing—  
I saw an old dame sighing  
Beside a lonely glen.  
'Sing high,' she said, 'sing low,' she said,  
'Wild tempests to the sea,  
The wailing of the pibroch's note  
That bade farewell to me.  
And wae fa' the red deer,  
The swift deer, the strong deer ;  
Wae fa' the cursèd deer  
That take the place o' men.'

Where'er a noble deed is wrought,  
Where'er the brightest realms of thought,

The artist's skill, the martial thrill,  
Be sure to Scotia's land is wed.  
She casts the glamour of her name  
O'er Britain's throne and statesmen's fame,  
From distant lands, 'neath foreign names,  
Some brilliant son his birthright claims ;  
She has reared them amid tempests,  
    And cradled them in snow,  
To give the Scottish arms their strength,  
    Their hearts a kindly glow.  
So weave well the bright threads,  
The red threads, the green threads—  
Woof well the strong threads  
That bind their hearts to thine.

## TO THE CLAN MACDONALD.

(ON THEIR FIRST FORMATION AS A SOCIETY SINCE  
THE '45.)

ROUSE, ye children of Macdonald,  
From each far and distant shore !  
Hands outstretched across the ocean  
Cling in fancied grasp once more.  
Helpers of the weak and suffering,  
As the knights of ancient lore ;  
Hearts that never knew dishonour  
Beat as loyal as of yore.  
Wake again, O great *Clann Dhomhnuil* !\*  
Let not duty call in vain :  
In the vanguard of the battle  
Form your serried ranks again.

\* Clan Donald.

*To the Clan Macdonald*

Let the fiery cross be carried  
Over mountain, foss, and fell ;  
Whilst the piper's magic music  
Stirs our spirits with its spell.  
Rally, gallant sons of Donald,  
From each far and exiled home !  
Distance cannot now divide us,  
Wheresoe'er our footsteps roam,  
Sworn to stand henceforth as brothers  
On the battlefield of life :  
Willing hands held out to succour  
Weaker members in the strife.

Gather in the scattered columns  
Of our great and noble name ;  
Sons whose fathers' deeds are written  
In the deathless Book of Fame.  
Ye whose sires preferred to witness  
With their lives 'gainst tyrant rule,  
Mightier in their landless honour  
Than to live as fortune's tool.  
First of all the clans of Scotland  
Where a daring deed was done ;  
Last to leave the field of battle  
Till the stubborn fight was won.

Not in vain our boasted motto,  
    ' By the sea and by the land ;'  
In the strength of love united,  
    By our ancient laws we stand.  
No ! not dead the hearts that slumber,  
    Crushed awhile 'neath alien heel.  
Land and pelf they have bereft us,  
    But our dreams they could not steal.  
Let the hideous garb be banished  
    Of a dull and sodden race,  
And the graceful kilt and sporan  
    On your manly forms replace.\*

Oh, to see the glens and valleys  
    Start to sentient life again,  
With the laughter of the sheiling  
    And the bleatings from the pen !  
Oh, to see the waving tartan  
Floating free o'er heathery breeze,  
And the children's laughter echo  
    Through the silent forest trees !  
Oh, to hear the tones of greeting  
    In the kindly Gaelic tongue,  
And the beauteous tales of Ossian  
    In their native language sung !

\* After the '45 the Highland dress was forbidden to be worn by Highlanders for many years.

*To the Clan Macdonald*

Where are now the clustering hamlets  
Nestling on the fair hillside ?  
Where are now our stately peasants,  
Once our nation's prop and pride ?  
Ask the waves that beat incessant  
'Gainst the gray and beetling crags ;  
Ask the owner of rich forests,  
As of glorious sport he brags ;  
Ask that briny sea, made salter  
With the tears of feeble age :  
Loud protesting 'gainst the exile  
Writ in history's darkest page,  
Breaking o'er the ships that bore them  
In a blind, impotent rage.

Scotia ! you have need to waken,  
If your heart be not inured  
To the wailing of your children  
And the wrongs they have endured.  
Pace the wild and trackless regions,  
Once the right of Scottish men—  
Sent adrift to make a shelter  
For the monarch of the glen.  
See the shrouded hills of Scotland  
Wrapped in sorrow's misty pall,

Mourning for her ancient language,  
Well-nigh lost 'neath *Sassanach*\* thrall.  
From the shadows reigning o'er her  
Free our land, O great *Clann Dhomhnuil!*

\* English.

## 'TWIXT THE GLOAMIN' AND THE MIRK.

THE changeful colours stealing  
O'er purple hills, revealing  
A deeper power of beauty than we dreamt of in the day ;  
Yet the sense of incompleteness,  
In its fair and transient sweetness,  
Like a radiant gleam of glory rests, then flits away—  
'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

Each mossy hidden rill,  
Sighing softly down the hill,  
The silence and the mystery of summer gloamin' share ;  
The wee birds 'neath the eaves  
Twitter softly 'midst the leaves,  
As if they feared a discord to mar the stilly air—  
'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

Some far-off bittern cries :  
O'er reeded tarn he flies,



Like an evil thing of darkness discovered in a crime ;  
The trees in lengthened shades  
Grow deeper down the glades,  
Throwing strange and chequered patterns o'er the steps  
of time—  
'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

The sound of waters splashing,  
O'er rocky boulders dashing,  
Where the Kelpie lies in hiding in his darkened pool  
below ;  
Till we feel the spell draw nearer,  
And his song grow sweet and clearer  
As he tries to wile us downward to the rocky cavern's  
flow—  
'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

Ah ! 'tis not the Kelpie singing  
Brings the anguish'd memory stinging,  
And the briny tears that blister in runnels as they fall ;  
Remembrance and regret—  
The seals that time hath set  
On many a human heart for deeds and thoughts beyond  
recall—  
'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

Had we been a little kinder,  
Or remained for ever blinder

To the waking and the bitterness of knowing, all too late,  
    That the love we most desired,  
    And never rightly prized,  
Lies closed to us for ever in the cruel scheme of fate—  
    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

    But the sorrow is to think  
    That the tiny missing link  
That might have made the broken cords to last,  
    Was snapped by us in twain,  
    And our self-inflicted pain  
Has no need of consolation for the unrelenting past—  
    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

    The waking bogles crying,  
    As the light of day is dying,  
Own no power to bid their ghostly presence cease ;  
    From the inmost dark recesses  
    Of our hearts they fiercely press us,  
Nor wait to ask the least permission for release—  
    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

    And the holy, pitying stars  
    Look down upon the wars  
That we helpless little mortals wage with life ;  
    Beacon-lights of God are they,  
    Set to guide us on our way,  
Lest we fail to reach the distant shore amid the warring  
    strife—  
    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

How bright our early dreaming,  
When hope o'er life was streaming,  
Like yon blaze of sunset glory over earth and sea ;  
Bathing hill and vale in dying,  
Like a glimpse of heaven lying  
On days that never more may come for you or me—  
Ere the gloamin' met the mirk.

Ah ! how early must we sever  
From our cherished ties for ever,  
To climb the steep and rugged paths of pain  
How little can we tell  
*When* we speak our last farewell  
To the hearts we love and trust to meet again—  
'*Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.*

They rest within the vale,  
Where they cannot hear the wail  
From the yearning hearts arising at the whisper of a  
name ;  
Where the lonely cypress waves,  
Mayhap upon their graves,  
And they cannot know the weary backward glance from  
heights of fame—  
'*Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.*

Perchance those beams are straying  
O'er some battle-plain, and playing

64     *'Twixt the Gloamin' and the Mirk*

Where the darling of some cherished heart is slain :

    To the chilly rays disclosing

    All that's left of love, reposing

On a broken sword indented, with many a crimson  
    stain—

    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

    Tender shades—the cruder lines,

    That in garish daylight shines,

Are softened by the hallowed cloak of night,

    With an undulating grace

    Of the mountain's rugged face ;

And every blade of grass grows fair in that mysterious  
    light—

    'Twixt the gloamin' and the mirk.

    When our little day is gone,

    And its feeble light hath shone,

May the hearts we hold the dearest and the best

    Place our errors, gently laid,

    In the kindly sombre shade,

Where the outspread wings of death upon us rest—

    When the gloamin' meets the mirk.

## THE SPELL OF THE MOUNTAINS.

HAST thou e'er heard it—  
    Heard it and understood—  
The sough of the low wind's warning  
    Sweeping across a wood ;  
The tension of nerve in the silence,  
    The hush ere the coming storm,  
Riving the pine from the mountains,  
    A helpless and quivering form ;  
The voice of the wild hills calling,  
    In the roar of the cataract's foam ;  
Dashing against your heartstrings,  
    Pursuing wherever you roam ?

Hast thou e'er watched the dawning,  
    As her touch through Nature thrills,  
The pulse of new life awaking ~  
    In the hush of the slumbering hills ;

*The Spell of the Mountains*

The whirring noise of the wild duck  
Skimming the mountain tarn ;  
The gentle lowing of cattle,  
Warm-housed below in the barn ;  
God's dumb creation arising  
At the call of that mystic hour,  
Dividing the day from the darkness,  
To praise His infinite power ;  
Sinking again into slumber,  
To await the new-born day,  
Whose trumpeting herald proclaimeth  
The night is passing away ?

Far out on the plains of Iceland,  
White with untrodden snow,  
The reindeer are racing in thousands,  
Jingling their bells as they go.  
The weak, the fallen, the luckless,  
Wild hearts with fever afire,  
Who fall in the race are trampled—  
The race for a life's desire.  
Once in a life, if once only,  
Reindeer and doe must fly,  
To drink of the brackish waters  
Of the wild North Sea—or die !

In the silence of virginal forests,  
In the heat of the tropical grove—  
Wherever man's restless ambition  
His brother to exile drove ;  
In the marble halls of a palace,  
By the tottering steps of a throne,  
Be that man a son of the mountains,  
The mountains will claim their own.  
Once in a life, if once only,  
With heart and brain afire,  
Through the ranks of love or friendship,  
Comes the thirst of a life's desire.  
To hear the falls of the Spean\*  
In their tumbling vehemence roar,  
Or watch the salt spray dashing  
In a storm on the ' Dorus Mor ;'†  
When the spell of the mountain calling  
Rends the soul with her plaintive cry,  
Back to the heather-clad mountains  
Her sons must return, or die !

\* A river in Lochaber.

† Near Corryvrechan.

## THE VISION.

(FOUNDED ON A HIGHLAND PROPHECY.)

LET the heroes of Culloden lie within a martyr's grave,  
Where the thistle and the heather o'er our gallant clans-  
men wave.

Broken stems, by fickle fortune crushed amid the bloody  
stour,

From your mains the cry of vengeance riseth from Drum-  
mossie Moor.

Wild and cold the driving snowdrift rooted up, in  
anguished throes,

From our land the cause of freedom, from our hearts the  
Scottish rose ;

Left to die in bitter exile, withered by an alien blast,

And the awful, chill remembrance of an unavailing past.

Bitter contrast—shouts of welcome by Loch Sheil's  
historic shore,

To the final close—Culloden, and the tartan stiff with  
gore !



Let the heroes sleep their slumber, undisturbed by cruel  
dreams ;  
Not to them the shameless slaughter, or the fierce and  
lurid gleams'  
Of the reddening flames devouring quick and dead, the  
awful stain  
Of butchered lives, and tender children's pleadings all in  
vain.  
In the heaven-recorded actions, at the last dread judgment  
day,  
The vanquished shall be named the victors of that final,  
fatal fray :  
Standing in their blood-stained tartans, in the great  
St. Andrew's name,  
By their deeds for faith and country they the martyr's  
crown shall claim.

See ye not those waving banners, tossing high upon the  
breeze ?  
See ye not the moving masses, dark, compact as forest  
trees ?  
Near and nearer to my vision squares are formed in  
battle plan,  
Whilst a noble horseman, leading, marshals up each  
separate clan ;

White the rose upon his helmet, white the charger that  
he rides,

Kingly grace in every motion as the phalanx swiftly glides.

Ah! the heather-root is foremost: these I know—Clan  
Donald's men;

Wild and high the gathering slogan echoing through the  
silent glen.

List! how light the footsteps falling—are the fearless  
Camerons here?

Surely, for their ancient comrades greet them with a  
ringing cheer.

Lightning-thrills of eager triumph through the Highland  
army runs,

There the flash of claymores gleaming, here the crash of  
rending guns;

Tossing plumes and varied tartans, in the glorious pride  
of race:

Old-time feuds seem half forgotten, or for Scotia's sake  
give place.

Backwards pressed the phantom foemen, as dissolving  
mists disperse:

'Tis some future-day Culloden that these shadowy forms  
rehearse.

When that day of retribution, when the doom on these  
shall fall,

God knoweth; 'but His mills, though slowly, grind  
exceeding small.'

Pass into the realm of shadows, vision of the starry  
night,  
Broken wheels and shattered muskets, remnants of a  
ghastly fight !  
Let the moonbeams, glancing coldly down upon the  
vacant plain,  
Rest in softened shadows, hiding scenes that in my sight  
remain ;  
Be no monument erected to commemorate the name  
Till the second day Culloden shall arise in future  
fame.  
Then, my clansmen, let your onslaught know no second's  
rest or pause  
Till wild Drummossie Moor shall witness victory for the  
rightful cause ;  
Let the crowning of thy laurels be to show that Scotia's  
sons  
In the moment of her triumph all revengeful feeling  
shuns :  
Mercy to the weak and vanquished, fairest trait in hearts  
so strong,  
In power the gentleness of woman to the brave and true  
belong.  
' Peace and Freedom ' have been promised to return unto  
our shore  
When the ancient race of Stuart o'er the British rule  
once more.

Then haste ye, wheels of time revolving, bring us back  
our rightful king,

Descendant of the Scottish lions, to whom our hearts  
and memories cling !

We'll greet him with our claymores up, and loyal ringing  
cheer,

And raise the white cockade again for our young  
Chevalier !

TO THE 'SIOL CHUINN,'\* ON THEIR SECOND  
ANNUAL GATHERING.

'MID the turmoil of the city,  
High above its noisy din,  
To the pipers' stirring marches  
Are our clansmen gathered in.  
In their bright and varied tartan,  
In each noble, manly form,  
Steadfast eye, and truthful faces  
Speak the kind hearts, true and warm.  
From the far-off sea-girt islands,  
From the beauteous mountain-glen  
Come the merry-hearted maidens,  
Come Clan Donald's loyal men.  
Never such a day of meeting  
Since that dark and fatal day  
When ye met and fought together  
In that last disastrous fray ;

\* 'The Children of Conn,' a designation of the Clan Donald.

*To the ' Siol Chuinn '*

When thy best blood stained the heather  
With a deeper purple tinge—  
Pledge of that undying spirit  
Made to conquer, not to cringe !

Not in vain our clansmen gathered  
'Neath the banners of our name,  
Till the English strongholds shuddered  
To the echoes of their fame.  
For their own sweet Highland homesteads  
'Gainst our foes they took the field :  
Shall we see them pass to strangers,  
Or our rights more tamely yield ?  
Glens of birch and tangled hazel  
Now their children also claim :  
Is there one refuse to aid us,  
Let us not partake his shame !  
Outcast from his clan for ever,  
As an alien let him be,  
Or a withered branch that's severed  
From a green and living tree !

Clansmen, may no distant future  
See our meeting, if God wills,  
Not within a crowded city,  
But upon our heather hills !

Through the glens, once more repeopled,

On the land once more our own,

Wake the sleeping pulse of Nature

With the pipes' melodious tone !

It is coming, just as surely

As the mist must slowly rise,

Disclosing old familiar places

With a new and glad surprise.

Golden fields of ripe corn waving,

Maidens singing at the wheel,

Silent forest-echoes waking

To the children's merry peal.

Highland customs, Highland faces

Reigning both in cot and hall,

And the claims of kin and clanship,

One great bond, uniting all.

## THE QUEST OF THE WEST WIND.

ON the purple wings of the twilight hour,  
When love expands as the evening flower,\*  
Disclosing her heart in a golden shower  
    When the glare of the day is over,  
A soft West Wind stole over the seas,  
Rustling and sighing 'mid the rowan-trees,  
Whispering dreams to the slumbering leaves  
    Where the bees on the rosebuds hover.

A maiden sighed as the shades came down,  
Hiding the day with their darkening frown,  
And the surf came rolling in, sullen and brown,  
    Flecked with a white-frothed anger.  
Her heart stirred, restless and ill at ease—  
E'en the scent of the roses ceased to please—  
For the song of the wandering evening breeze  
    Was fraught with a dreamy languor.

\* The evening primrose.



Far from her home, in a stranger land,  
Gazing beyond the ribbed bars of sand,  
Where the winging seamew's snowy band  
    Proclaimed the flight of the swallow—  
Away on the breath of the driving wind,  
With nought to harass and nought to bind,  
'Neath brighter skies a new home to find,  
    Where, alas ! she could not follow.

'Tell me,' the lonely maiden cried,  
'O wayward Wind, that wanders so free  
Over the land and over the sea,  
Hast thou no message or song for me  
    That shall still my heart's desire ?  
Thou bringest the rain to the parchèd rose,  
A smile where the rippling streamlet flows ;  
The violets their sweetest perfumes disclose,  
    Wooed by thy magic lyre.'

'The Wind in the trees softly replied :  
'I come from the fertile land of France,  
Breathing the airs of an old romance  
Blent with a lily, a smile, and a glance ;  
    'Tis thine, should you will it so.'  
'Bear back thy song,' said the maid ; 'though sweet,  
Like yon fleecy cloud 'tis as airy and fleet :  
The theme of the song for the nation is mete—  
    Transient as meteor-glow.'

To the fair, sunny South, its flowers to explore,  
And gather anew for the maid rich store,  
The Wind swept out on its mission once more,  
    To essay some new charm again.

A song, 'neath the gleam of the evening star,  
To the tinkling sound of a light guitar,  
Wafted a message of love afar  
    From a dark-eyed son of Spain.

'Such passionate love as this I dread,  
Where jealousy runs like a twisted thread ;  
Though warm and true, no doubt,' she said,  
    'To such I will ne'er surrender.

The maid who would wed with a son of the South  
Must guard every word that falls from her mouth,  
Lest the monster should grow to such monstrous  
    growth,  
    From which dear Heaven defend her !'

'I come from one of Albion's sons,  
Where gold like a mountain rivulet runs  
Still into the lap of those favoured ones,  
    To add new heaps to their store ;  
Whilst the poor and needy must rest in peace,  
Content with the sweat of their brows to increase  
New wealth for the master who holds the lease  
    Of lives that are dead at the core.

‘Yet for thee I sing a more pleasing tune,  
Though ever the strain harks back to the moon—  
A waltz, a dream, or a night in June ;

For, alas ! there is no variety.’

‘Ah, no,’ sighed the maiden, ‘I ne’er could go  
To a land so monotonous, dull, and slow,  
Without song or dance to break through the woe  
Of a leaden-faced propriety.  
For gay and loving, tender and true,  
Must the heart be found, though you search the  
world through ;

I have tended and guarded the rose for you,  
But the rue you have brought to me.’

On the voice of the Wind came a tremulous sound,  
As if angel wings were sweeping the ground ;  
Such a flood of melody swelled around  
As of heavenly harps let loose.

’Twas a child of Erin, with Erin’s smile,  
Who struck the wild chords with such loving guile,  
The heart of the maid he did almost wile  
In a net tied with Cupid’s noose.

‘Oh, son of the Emerald Isle, depart !  
You have snared my senses, but not my heart,  
With thy witching eyes and thy winning art,  
But I do not sigh for thee.

I sigh for a smile as witching as thine,  
And for eyes that as true as the starlight shine,  
That once, and once only, looked into mine,  
Far down by the Western Sea.'

Wearied and spent, the Wind listlessly strayed  
Midst the Northern mountains in beauty arrayed ;  
O'er a bed of white heather his errand betrayed,  
Where Cupid reposed on his throne.

'Oh, where hast thou been, thou perfumed Wind ?  
'Tis a breath of the heavens thou hast been to find ;  
Now all the world seems so beauteous and kind,  
And its flowers have lovelier grown.'

'I have been where the delicate harebell blows,  
By the waters whose musical cadence flows  
Down the hills where the heather and rowan grows,  
And the snow on the summits lie.  
I have heard the weird music that bursts on the ear  
To drive away sadness or dissipate fear,  
As through the wide glens the pipes sounded clear  
Till the answering echoes reply.

'There the trimly-built sons of the North look so gay,  
With their wide-floating plaids, in their tartan array,  
As they dance to a reel or a stately strathspey,  
Whilst their hearts beat a rhythm as true.

From the brightest, the lightest, best dancer of all,  
As a tree of the forest, both graceful and tall,  
I bring thee a token his face to recall—  
    A sprig of white heather for you.'

Then trembled the maiden, and placed in her breast  
The magical flower that soothed trouble's unrest.  
'Oh, bear me away, thou kind Wind of the West,  
To the hills of the North, as a bird seeks her nest.  
I have found me love's haven, now ended thy quest—  
'Neath the tartan plaid beats the heart truest and best !'

## AN INCIDENT OF THE '45.

'Twas ere the last disastrous day  
Which, Scotland's hopes laid low,  
Saw the red stream of priceless blood  
On drear Culloden flow.  
Macdonald's strong right arm withheld,  
In smarting silence stands,  
Each haughty Islesman's flashing eye  
His right of precedence demands.\*  
Spake the unconquered soul within,  
Which ne'er could insult brook,  
Or e'en endure from Monarch's ire  
A slighting tone or look.  
That fatal day that gave to those  
Low myrmidons of State  
The power to weave a web that drew  
Its meshes round their fate !

\* Since the Battle of Bannockburn the Macdonalds had always held the privilege of being placed on the right hand in battle. By an unpardonable error of judgment, at Culloden they were placed on the left.

The Chevalier to Moy retired,  
    In forced seclusion stayed, as yet  
Unknowing that for him the star  
    Of destiny had almost set.  
His clans around him once again,  
    Victory assured as in the past,  
Though Loudon with two thousand men  
    The Northern Capital held fast.  
Unhappy Prince ! could he but see  
    His weary wanderings and his flight,  
His hand had paused to raise the veil  
    That hid the future from his sight !

Could he but see those flames on high  
    (Unlike the beacon's kindly light),  
Whose lurid blaze a welcome gave  
    From lone Glenfinnan's height ;  
When clansmen, with their broad claymores,  
    Gathered in loyal groups,  
Which Falkirk, Stirling, Prestonpans  
    Saw sweep the English troops !  
Far other sounds will rend the air,  
    Black with sulphurous smoke—  
The little children's cries for aid,  
    Which falling timbers choke.

On undefended roofs alone  
 Fell the same savage doom :  
 Women and helpless wounded men  
 Burnt in one living tomb !  
 Oh, was it well for England's name  
 To tarnish chivalry's fair fame,  
 And raise to God on funeral pyres  
 Th' eternal records of her shame ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Around the citadel the troops  
 Proceed their sentinels to range,  
 So none within might venture forth,  
 Or intercourse without exchange.  
 Loudon, from knowledge lately gained,  
 Knowing the Prince lay close at hand,  
 Held fifteen hundred soldiers armed,  
 To sally forth at his command.  
 Like hounds in leash that sight the start,  
 So panted they to seize their prey.  
 Gold, glittering gold, the hoped reward,  
 Would soon be theirs, ere break of day.

Some straggling soldiers of the guard  
 Within a wayside hostel stayed ;  
 In whispering tones their plans discuss,  
 Their leader's destined march betrayed



To one—a girl of tender years—  
    The landlord's youngest born,  
Who, hid unnoticed, heard the tale,  
    In mingled fear and scorn.  
' This very night—it must not be !'  
    No time had she for thought ;  
Her stifled breath came quick and short,  
    Counsel with none she sought.  
To seek for aid she dared not stay,  
    Or share her secret dread,  
Lest that might bring suspicion, too,  
    Upon her parent's head.

Across the threshold stealing past,  
    A tiny shadow sped ;  
The eager soldiers heard no sound,  
    So soft the footsteps tread.  
Out, away through the gathering gloom,  
    And stealthily through the door ;  
Past the drowsy sentry's post,  
    Out o'er the trackless moor.  
Behind her lay fair Inverness,  
    The Empress of the North,  
Whose lights thrown o'er the wooded loch,  
    Like stars were glittering forth.

As speeds the startled fawn who hears  
The blast of hunter's horn,  
So ran the undaunted child to reach  
Moy Hall before the morn.  
No coward tremors shook her frame,  
Although—were it counted o'er—  
The weary miles before her stretched  
Would span her life, and more.  
One backward glance—a tightening pain  
Her little soul did fill,  
That comes, we know not how or whence,  
Sure prescience of ill !  
The lights of home were fading fast,  
The falling dews felt chill ;  
Strange voices, murmuring, seemed to speak  
In every babbling rill.

Hark ! She can hear the trampling hoofs  
Of horse behind her forge.  
Nay, 'twas but the rushing winds,  
Swept down the mountain gorge.  
Farther away recedes the town,  
Yet farther still the goal ;  
Until the numbness of despair  
Upon her spirits stole.

The stars, the forest trees, the heath,  
    Before her vision flies ;  
Her failing limbs beneath her sink,  
    Prone on the earth she lies.  
With earnest eyes upturned, that seemed  
    To pierce the distant sky :  
'Just strength to be in time, dear God !  
    And then, if need be—die !'

'One effort more'—her courage grows ;  
    She thinks she sees the foes  
Press round the silent, sleeping house,  
    Unguarded, as she knows.  
'One effort more, the battlefields  
    Saw suffering more dire.'  
What matters now her aching limbs,  
    Her little brain on fire ?  
To save her Prince ! Oh, glorious thought !  
    Her heart beat wild and fast.  
She sights the house, she feels no more,  
    Her sufferings are past !

'Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late,  
    At such unseemly hour ?  
Whoe'er thou art, is this a time  
    To seek my lady's bower ?'

So spake the guard, and through the door  
To scan the stranger tried.  
'Some traitor knave, no doubt,' he said ;  
But here the child espied.  
Little it needed, then, to rouse  
A household to alarm ;  
Still less, when Scotia's King lay hid,  
For those on guard to arm.  
Clanchattan's lady rose in haste  
(Her lord was far away),  
For in these perilous times the chief  
Beside her dared not stay.

Amaze and pity filled her breast,  
As, clinging to her skirt,  
The o'er-spent child her tale essayed  
In gasping breaths to blurt.  
Enough the lady heard to make  
The blood mount to her cheek,  
To think a hero's heart could beat  
In frame so small and weak.  
Oh ! dauntless were the daring deeds  
Performed within her ken,  
To prove that Highlanders stood first  
In valour among men.

But none that drew the blinding tears  
    From bearded men like rain,  
And none that made the Prince's heart  
    Contract with keener pain ;  
For, ere the streaks of early dawn  
    Had tinged the hills with red,  
Scotland's youngest heroine  
    Lay numbered with the dead !

## A HEART'S DESIRE.

NOT riches do I ask, or claim  
A place among earth's favoured great ones.  
The humble roof of unknown fame,  
Of calm content and homely sweetness,  
Fulfil a heart's desire.

By storm-beat shore, or wooded loch,  
Near where the mountain torrent rushes ;  
Or yon lone isle where roses break\*  
Through heather bells their tender blushes,  
More sweet than trails of scented briar.

The power to sing, as wild birds sing—  
No thought of gain, or gaping crowds to please ;  
But, as the linnet's notes a thought may bring  
Of mountain lands, the wanderer's heart to ease,  
Or cottage roof o'erhung by rowan tree.

\* In the Island of Eigg yellow ground-roses grow amongst the heather.

My native land ! no lapse of time  
Could change my love, or make it sever  
Links that like ivy's tendrils climb  
Around thy hills and crags for ever,  
    To bind my life to thee.

Somewhere 'neath shadows of thy hills to rest,  
With trusted friends and Nature's book to read ;  
With eye to see and heart to understand,  
And power to help affliction in her need,  
    Or free from care the helpless and the weak.

'Tis not in mad pursuit of pleasure  
That peace of heart or happiness is found.  
The fevered life of towns beats weary measure  
To those whose ears are sickened of the round  
    Of selfish aims and thoughts too mean to seek.

Life's stream runs stronger, deeper, where  
The mountains raise their crests on high ;  
There shades of doubt, like mists, dissolve in air,  
Disclosing Faith's pure summits pointing to the sky,  
    Where soars the lark to sing her matins there.

Our home of chivalry, of dance and song,  
Who that knows thee but hath loved thee well ?  
Thy gentle maidens, and thy sons so strong  
To guard the right and sound oppression's knell,  
    That freedom's sway might rule a land so fair.

How sweet to watch the pale blue smoke arise  
From cottage roof in rings of quaint design ;  
Ethereal shapes that mingle with the ether of the skies  
Against the background of a steep incline—  
    A rising artist copying Nature's laws.

Sweet oasis of rest 'midst life's most desert sands,  
If peace on earth be found 'tis there, surrounded by  
    the hills.  
Far from the haunts of men our higher life expands ;  
Attuned to Nature's lays our inmost being thrills  
    With bold resolve to fight and win the noblest cause.



## THE CHIEFTAIN'S CANDLESTICKS.

IN one of those rare intervals of peace  
    When Scotia's thistle ceased to prick,  
And England's rose, divested of her thorns,  
    Blushed out afresh in clusters thick  
    On every cottage wall,  
A legend, quaint and old,  
Round Highland hearths is told,  
    Of how it did befall  
A chief whose name's renowned in story  
For wit and grace as well as glory ;  
    This tale they oft recall.

' The Baron sat in solemn state,  
The expected stranger guest to wait ;  
In sumptuous fare the board was laid,  
For which the English archers made

The neighbouring forests yield ;  
Rich luscious vintage ta'en from France  
When England's soldiers couched the lance  
On many a tented field ;  
Fat roasted capons, venison pasty,  
Large juicy joints and dishes tasty,  
With fruits and cakes prepared.  
Though golden platters placed in splendour  
Showed somewhat of barbaric grandeur,  
The host no pains had spared  
To make the chief who crossed the border,  
Of all this wealth a mute recorder.

Young Keppoch came—a handsome lad,  
In belted plaid and tartan clad,  
As fits our gallant sons the best ;  
Regarding now the freeborn air,  
Or haughty glance return the stare,  
The jewelled dirk and sword,  
Two English yeomen, blunt and frank,  
'Midst lusty cheer and tankards' clank,  
Spake up with one accord :  
' In yonder springold bold bespeaks  
The northern heights and snowclad peaks ;  
In troth meseems, our Scottish guest,  
An eagle from the topmost crest.'

Doubtless the banquet bred the boast  
Which came ungenerous from the host,  
    As, turning to the chief,  
He counted o'er his candles tall,  
Whose massive holders, six in all,  
    Stood out in bold relief :  
' Say, now, Macdonell, in your home,  
Beyond the mountain ranges lone,  
    If aught like this ye own ?  
These stems are richly crusted o'er  
With strange device from foreign shore.  
I'd give the value, yea, and more,  
    Were I their equal shown.'

On Keppoch's face light laughter played ;  
Scornful awhile his temper stayed,  
    Then calm and cold replied :  
' Sir Baron bold, had I the right  
To play the host to you this night,  
    I ne'er with you had vied ;  
Or cast to stranger guest installed  
'Neath Scottish roof a taunt uncalled,  
    Despite its friendly guise.  
The wealth we love, the slogan's peal,  
Or when we flash our claymore's steel,  
    Need cause you Saxons no surprise.  
My country's custom, an thou wilt,  
Is, thus, to kiss the dagger's hilt,

And swear to bide the loss.  
And, when you come to witness mine,  
These clumsy candlesticks of thine  
    Shall seem but useless dross ;  
The value of each stem then claim,  
In Scotland loud proclaim my shame,  
    Be these my words untrue.'

'Your challenge I accept, proud Scot !  
A lesson sharp ye read, I wot,  
How rough-edged speech, by wine begot,  
    May live its power to rue.'

There stood 'midst wild Lochaber's snows,  
A terror to approaching foes,  
    A castle old and gray ;  
The stronghold of a famous race,  
Who ne'er to foeman yielded place,  
    And ne'er did trust betray.  
A silken banner with the cross  
Of great St. Andrew, o'er the fosse  
    Waved from a turret high.  
Swift swirling Roy came rushing round,  
In and out each grassy mound,  
And on the battlements arrayed,  
The moonbeams on the broadswords played,  
    Flashed out against the sky.

n troth it was a sight to make  
The English in their jerkins shake,  
    Had they not come as friends.  
But hearty welcome waits the lord,  
Who, true to honour's plighted word,  
    Comes now to make amends ;  
Or else to prove Macdonell's chief,  
In height of thoughtless anger brief,  
    Had lied to prove his cause.  
Across the heavy drawbridge passed  
Fine retinue of vassals classed  
    As writ in herald's laws.  
Within, the salmon and the roe,  
Washed down by copious bumper's flow,  
    'Gan make the strangers feel  
That, when the bagpipes' lively skirl  
Awoke the dance with twist and twirl,  
    'Twas whisky made *them* reel.

The tartan, draped in many a fold,  
With warlike trophies decked the hold ;  
    And here within the hall  
Six stalwart men the entrance line,  
Whose flaming torch of resinous pine  
    In ruddy shadows fall.  
Upon the left arm glanced the shield,  
The right the heaviest sword could wield,

To pierce the traitor through,  
Who dared to lift one finger's tip,  
Or slighting word by chance let slip,  
    Against their chieftain true.  
'Say now, Sir Baron, if the sight  
Of these my torches prove me right?  
In times of peace a gentle light,  
In war six doughty warriors fight,  
    As mountain torrents roar.  
My candlesticks were ne'er purloined,  
Nor had I figures richly coined,  
    Brought from a foreign shore.  
Possessors of the greatest wealth  
Are never proof 'gainst thieving stealth,  
    They wake to find it flown.  
But in those steadfast eyes there shines  
A metal minted in the mines  
    Where cowards are unknown.'

A generous heart the Saxon bluff  
Hid 'neath a manner somewhat rough,  
    To know when he was wrong.  
'Priceless indeed such torchlight glow,  
Which, cast aside, can aim a blow,  
    Proven in warfare long.  
In every lineament I trace

The proved fidelity of race  
Which lives in every sunburnt face  
    Of men so true and strong,  
Sir Chief, I do not grudge the cost,  
And here declare the wager lost.'

## THE ATONEMENT.

(A LEGEND OF STRATHARDLE.)

‘Lady Lindsay sat on the Raven’s Rock,  
An’ weary spun the lee-lang day,  
Though her fingers were worn, they aye bore the stain  
O’ the blood o’ her first luv, the lycht Lindsay.’  
*Old Ballad.*

LADY LINDSAY perched on her pinace high,\*  
And dreed her penance drear,  
Mingling her moan to the waters’ sigh,  
Day by day, and year by year—  
Oh, hé, but she was weary !  
The angler starts with fearsome dread,  
When slow descends the ghostly thread ;  
Sees, like the waves, thin vapoury mist,  
A shadowy form, and flees a tryst  
With spot so strange and eerie.

\* For over twø centuries after her death the unfortunate lady continued to do penance for the murder of her first husband on the top of Creagan-an-Fhithich, a rock three hundred feet above the river Eiricht.



The Lindsay lay in his murdered bed,  
But a mouldering heap of dust ;  
Bolts, barbican, and spears had sped,  
Crumbling with time and rust—  
Oh, hé, but she was weary !  
Yet the distaff spins, till the lady wins  
A gift to atone for her crime ;  
Till the night-dew falls, and the day begins  
In summer's heat, or winter's rime,  
On the haunted rock sae skeery.

Who flies by night and flies so swift  
Through the blinding sleet and hail ?  
Dark fell the snow and cold the drift,  
Loud roared the tempest's wail.  
Oh, bitter day when Scotland's fate  
Fell 'neath the base usurper's hate ;  
The last, the dearest of his race,\*  
The sport of cruel Fortune's chase. \*

Who rides so fast and rides so hard  
Through the blinding storm uncared ?  
Wild-eyed, dishevelled, cut and scarred,  
'Tis Ballmochrochie's Laird.  
Strathardle's men must win this night  
For their gallant part in Culloden's fight ;

\* Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

'Neath the starry skies, or the fox's lair,  
The leave a shelter scant to share.

At the Raven's Rock Nial Mor drew rein,\*

And he looked his company o'er ;  
So weary, spent, and sick with pain,  
Till his heart contracted sore.

' My lads, no home have I to give,  
But safety here at least doth live ;

And for our food the running stream  
Where Eiricht's pools with plenty teem.'

Long and hard the troopers rode,

Thundering o'er moor and brake ;  
But they found no trace of Nial's abode,  
Whom they sought for the guineas' sake.

Through wind and snow rough William's ment†  
Wheeled back by the rugged glen ;  
But Strathardle's lads they laughed in their sleeve,  
And the Lindsay's Lady her thread doth weave.

Like couchant hounds all night they lay,

Each man upon his arms ;  
But Ferguson's Laird he watched till the day  
Broke in, for the night's alarms.

Loud raged the storm without, no sound  
Went in by the boulders round,

\* Nial Mor-nam-breac, or Big Neil of the trout, so called for his skill as an angler.

† The Duke of Cumberland.

Though the waters boiled by the Raven's Rock,  
And the spate came down with awesome shock.

Nial Mor crept out from his rocky cave  
To fish for the speckled trout,  
But the rushing waters and stormy wave,  
Carried and swept him out ;  
Swept and swirled him, the waters vast,  
Heaving and tossing, hurried him past ;  
Dashing and foaming, the boiling flood  
Sucked in on the rock with a sickening thud.

Down from the rock a shadowy thread  
Dropped as the eddy span,  
Down from the Raven's Rock o'erhead  
Till it reached to the drowning man.  
Despairing he clutched at the saving straw  
Held out by the thin invisible claw ;  
But the Lindsay's Lady her capture hauled  
On shore, then loud to the heavens called,

Till the echoes sent back the eldritch screech  
Of joy that her task was done ;  
With distaff and spindle her thread did reach  
From her hand to the life she'd won.  
Ferguson's Laird looked up to the rock,  
His hair stood up and his knees did knock,

And he cast the magic thread with fear  
When he saw the Lady's form appear.

Down fell the grizzly spiky hair,  
And the fingers worn to the stump ;  
When the seamed and wrinkled face, laid bare,  
Fled with the vanishing hump.

Fair rolled the golden locks unbound  
Till they reached unto the ground ;  
Fair beyond words for the grace within  
That shone o'er the pardoned Lady's sin.

She spake, and her voice like music fell  
Full on the listening ear,

As if some old-world lute did dwell

In quaint tones far and near :

' Brave follower of my grandsires' race,\*

Praise God this day I've seen thy face !

The grandchild of a Stuart King

Disgrace upon their name did bring :

' Disgrace this hour hath wiped for aye

From the fair Stuart fame.

A life for a life, my penance lay,

To give for my tarnished name.

\* Lady Janet, *née* Gordon, was daughter of the second Earl of Huntly, and grand-daughter of James I. of Scotland.

Brave follower of our race, the wave  
That swept thee past, my rescue gave ;  
Cancelled at last, my vigil lone  
For murdered Lindsay doth atone.'

The distaff fell from her whitened hand,  
Where long she'd spun sae weary ;  
And the Lady passed to heaven's land,  
From her penance dark and dreary.  
The Eiricht flows by the Raven's Rock,  
But the shepherd, watching his peaceful flock,  
Looks up with a shiver still of dread,  
Lest he see the distaff and shadowy thread.

## THE LAND'S AWAKING.

As the torrent lying frozen,  
Far beneath the winter's snow,  
Waits impatient for the summer  
That shall bid its waters flow,  
Scotland, thou hast waited fevered,  
Through the silence of the past,  
Waiting for the call of freedom  
That should rouse our clans at last.

Long ago they sowed the harvest,  
It is time to reap the grain ;  
For the land of glens and heroes  
Calls upon her sons again.  
Sound the pibroch on the mountains  
Where the coronach was sung,  
As the fitful winds of heaven  
Through her empty caverns rung.

Claim your ancient laws of freedom  
That your fathers' broadswords gained,  
When the Saxon Edward's minions  
O'er our nation would have reigned.  
Back ye drove the Roman legions  
Far beyond the winding Forth,  
Whilst our Highland race, triumphant,  
Dwelt secure within the North.

Now, alas ! the foe so subtle  
Steals upon us unawares ;  
Shall we stand aside, impassive, †  
Whilst he lays his cruel snares ?  
Shall we see our poorer brethren  
Like the driven cattle sold,  
Huddled out of home and shelter  
By the master-passion gold ?

Hopeless as a widow's tears,  
Whose life no second spring can know,  
The heart of Scotland wept in silence  
As she mourned her sons laid low.  
Proud Ben Nevis, gazing downward  
On each devastated vale,  
Heard the wild Atlantic ocean  
Singing with the rising gale.

*The Land's Awakening*

Hearken to the sea-birds screaming  
Through the misty Isle of Skye !  
O'er the rock-bound coast of Uist,  
    ' Back, come back ! ' the white gulls cry.  
Now shall come the land's awaking ;  
    See, the clans are gathering round,  
And the varied tartans mingle  
    To the stirring bagpipes' sound.

Stewart, shall the white rose wither  
    Ere you pluck it from the hedge ?  
Bold MacLeod, the whortleberries  
    For ' Ard Albainn ' be your pledge.  
Must the sturdy oak be riven  
    As the storm breaks o'er the dale,  
And the deer-grass grow neglected,  
    Cameron or Mackenzie fail ?  
Grant, shall Scotia call in vain  
    On a clan so strong and brave ?  
Or adversity's cold blast  
    Through the stately pine-trees rave ?  
Sons of Lauchlan, see the broom  
    On the moorland wild and free !  
And Clan Chattan's smart glengarry  
    Gaily decked with boxwood tree.



Wake the pipes and sound the slogan  
Of each true and loyal clan ;  
As of old for Scotland's freedom,  
Stand together, man to man !

My own loved clan, whose heather badge  
Crowns every mountain-peak,  
Thou first and best, what need have I  
In terms of praise to speak ?  
Remember Harlaw's hard-won fight ;  
Remember Bannockburn ;  
Remember every battlefield  
Whose fate on thee did turn !  
Recall the famous days of yore,  
Our own brave island kings,  
Around whose deeds the halo  
Of romance her radiance flings.  
Remember where Macdonald led,  
The clans stood firm and true ;  
Remember that when Scotland calls,  
Our trust is firm in you !

## A MEMORY.

WHEN far away from Scotia's shore,  
Her blue hills lie concealed  
From hearts whose deep unchanging love  
In absence stands revealed,  
With all the strength that closes round  
The Celtic love of home,  
Whose poesy and music lives  
Where'er their footsteps roam :

A sudden burst of music,  
Some old familiar air,  
May loose the gates of memory,  
And flood the soul with care.  
When parted from the scenes that made  
The joys of early days,  
Ere yet our footsteps learnt to tread  
Earth's dark mysterious ways,

The winds that sweep across the sea  
Bring thoughts of other years ;  
Perchance a warning message bears,  
Fraught with a mother's fears.  
It may be that we hear a word,  
In danger's darkest hour,  
Which falls upon the soul as dew  
Lights on a parchèd flower.

One word of those endearing tones,  
Heard in our childhood's home,  
Remains upon our hearts engraved  
As specially our own :  
Recalling one sweet tender face  
We ne'er may see again,  
Lit up with happy looks of love,  
Or flush of passing pain.

The vision of a chubby boy,  
Bright eyes undimmed by care,  
Reposing on that mother's breast  
His rumpled curling hair,  
Will rise before the sun-browned man,  
With mien grown sad and stern,  
In conning o'er life's complex page,  
Its meaning vast to learn.

*A Memory*

The sweet home faces gathered round  
The ruddy firelight glow,  
The echoes of whose laughter seems  
Upon his heart to flow.  
Again he feels the soothing hand  
Laid on his burning brow,  
Till that low voice of music  
Seems speaking to him now.

Dost know the power that lies within  
The tender Gaelic phrase,  
To conjure up within the mind  
A mother's gentle gaze?  
With all her trust of love unshaken,  
Alas! what thoughts those works awaken  
*'M'eudail bheag!'* \*  
A mingled sense of shame and grief,  
For all the wealth of love unpaid  
(With selfish thanks too scant and brief),  
Upon our inmost souls is laid.

\* Dear little one.

## THE PLAINT OF A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

(TO AN EXILED CHILD OF THE MIST.)

I DREAMT a dream of my childhood's days—  
A dream that is with me still ;  
Of the grand old hills and my northern home,  
And the voice of my favourite rill.  
And aye as it whispered and rippled on,  
Swollen with recent rain,  
The mountain heart seemed sad in my dream,  
And spake in a voice of pain :

‘ Why did ye wander away, childie—  
Why did ye wander away ?  
And what did ye wish to see, childie,  
That you would not beside me stay ?  
Did ye tire of the bright, clear wave, childie ;  
Did ye tire of the laughing burn ;  
Did ye find the great world so fair, dearie,  
That ye never wished to return ?

‘Were the voices you heard more true, childie,  
More varied and rich in tone  
Than the ripples that answered your day-dreams  
As you sat on your mossy throne ?  
Are the songs you listen to now, childie,  
More sweet than the voice of the rill ?  
Or the forced-out notes of the singer  
As true as the lark’s clear trill ?  
Are the fair, false lights of the city,  
As they shine on my bairn afar,  
As joyous a sight to my nursling’s eyes  
As the gleam of the evening star ?

‘For you I mirrored the trees, childie,  
For you I mirrored the sky ;  
I caught the shades of the passing clouds  
As they hurriedly floated by.  
The flowers that grew on the bank, childie,  
The flowers that grew too high,  
I painted as bright as they hung above,  
And spread them beneath thine eye.

‘There was nothing you wished for then, childie,  
I did not essay or try ;  
I laughed with thy sunny moods, childie,  
And have given thee sigh for sigh.

Did a cloud o'er thy youthful spirits fall,  
On my spray 'twas lightly thrown ;  
Did a tear-drop fall from your baby eyes,  
I swept it away with my own.  
Then why did ye wander away, dear—  
Why did ye wander away ?

Did ye wish to climb to the heights, childie—  
Did ye wish to climb to the heights ?  
Did ye long for a sound of the great world,  
And to see all its wondrous sights ?  
Did ye think of the great rough stones, childie,  
Ye must meet on your upward way ?  
Did you count all the weary steps, childie,  
That elapse ere the break of day—  
Ere the fall of night, when the burden  
Of grief is laid down for aye ?

Long wintry roads lie there, childie—  
Long wintry roads lie there ;  
And few the wayside flowers, childie—  
Few the wayside flowers.  
The driving snows are chill, dearie,  
The blinding storms of life.  
God keep thee safe in the sheltered vale,  
Away from the heated strife.

‘ How rough and steep the path, childie—  
The summit how hard to gain !  
Undaunted brow and toilsome step  
Must tread and conquer pain ;  
And mists float in between, childie,  
Mists float in between—  
The dark cloud mists that choke the soul,  
And hide the great unseen.

‘ What will you do alone, childie—  
What will you do alone ?  
The ebb and the flow of the sea, childie,  
Will sound but a weary moan.  
The world will teach you much, childie,  
Your heart hath little guessed ;  
You may fight such a weary fight, childie,  
And find no place of rest.  
Then what will you do alone, childie—  
What will you do alone ?

‘ Out there they may break your heart, childie—  
Out there they may break your heart.  
But ye may not weep or wail, childie,  
But steadily act your part.  
Many a glint of sun, childie—  
Many a glint of sun  
Shines brighter after the rain, dearie,  
Shines brighter after the rain.



Many a dimpling smile, childie—  
Many a dimpling smile  
Sweeps o'er a troubled heart, childie,  
As the sun o'er a ruined fane.'

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

I woke—and the dawn was stealing in,  
And the city alive with the noise and din  
Our daily necessities needs must bring,  
As long as our souls to our bodies cling :  
Ere the spirit her trammels of earth can fling  
Behind her for ever, and homeward wing  
Her flight, where the canticles ever sing  
Of the peace where grief hath no power to sting,  
Or sin with its poison to enter in.  
Life with its daily tasks to fulfil,  
Away from the drowsy shade of the hill,  
And the restful voice of my pearly rill.

## A SPRING SONG.

OH ! 'tis joyful to be living  
When the spring is just beginning,  
And the flowers are upward springing  
    On the lea ;  
When the flight of swallows skimming  
Bring their joyful tidings winging  
    O'er the sea.

Oh ! 'tis well to be going  
Where the mountain breeze is blowing  
    O'er the heath ;  
To watch the rising smoke  
Of mingled peat and oak,  
    Curling wreath.

Now the throstle's mellow song  
Makes me only dream and long  
    To be away ;

And to feel the restless motion  
Of the great Atlantic ocean,  
    Now at play ;  
With the waters loudly splashing  
O'er the rocks, and wildly dashing  
    Into spray.

There's a kind of wistful feeling  
Comes o'er my senses stealing,  
    Nigh to pain ;  
For the hills my spirit searches,  
And a glen of silver birches,  
    After rain.

There the hours pass so fleetly,  
And the wild birds sing so sweetly  
    Through the air.  
Oh ! no other scenes to me  
With the North so fresh and free  
    Can compare.

The dark-eyed children of the Isles,  
With their bright and winning smiles,  
    In happy bands  
Come dancing through the mist,  
By Hebridean sunsets kissed,  
    O'er silver sands.

*A Spring Song*

Oh ! 'tis happy to be resting  
Where the gull the foam is breasting,  
    And to share  
In the golden light of morning,  
Changing tints the hills adorning,  
    Over there.

Oh ! I sicken of the roses  
That the garden now discloses,  
    Lilies rare !  
And I'd leave them altogether  
For the thistle and the heather,  
    Blooming fair.

When the richly golden grain  
Tells of summer on the wane,  
    We shall hie  
Where the birches and the broom  
Scent the air with sweet perfume,  
    'Neath Scottish sky.

## GLOAMING IN THE GLEN.

THE willow wren is lirting, low hidden by the fern  
That just o'erhangs her little nest beside the wimpling  
burn.

The linnet has her own sweet song,  
When soft the shadows gray  
O'er sweeping lochs sweep dark and long,  
And in and out the lilies play.

Oh! sweet it is to watch and dream, by broomie knowe  
to stray,  
With the hush upon the woodland, and the moon upon  
the brae,  
When the tender light of gloaming falls so softly in the  
glen.

The purple scented heather and the scarlet rowan tree  
Are laden through the summer nights with some sweet  
mystery.

*Gloaming in the Glen*

'Tis not the moonbeam's silvery gleam,  
    Though bright her shafts may fall ;  
But aye it is the oft-told theme  
    That comes at Cupid's call,  
When kilted lads and Highland maids,  
Go hand in hand through flowery glades,  
And the tender light of gloaming falls so softly in the  
    glen.

What memories rise in filmy mist, salt tears that dim the  
    light,  
As birds disturbed upon their nests awake in sore affright,  
    Of days when all looked fair before  
    The last good-bye, the parting sore,  
    And the light that ne'er o'er land or sea  
    Was seen, had shone for you and me.  
We sought it 'mongst the heather, and now a tiny spray  
Is all that's left to whisper of the radiance of that day,  
When the tender light of gloaming lay so softly in the  
    glen.\*

\* The above poem is republished by permission of the editor of *Household Words*, in which journal it first appeared.

## TO THE NORTH WIND.

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
Breath of the west coast hill and sea,  
Wrap me, enfold me, kiss hands and brow,  
Health-giving, life-giving breeze on me blow ;  
Bring me the breath of my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
From the crest of the mountain thou comest to me ;  
I feel in thee just a fresh touch of snow,  
And I hear the swift swirl of the river's flow ;  
Bring the sound of the rills in my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
Thou singest the songs of the open sea ;  
Rock the barques, toss the barques, to and fro,  
And tinge the cheeks brown with a ruddy glow ;  
Sing me the songs of my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
Wave the dark pines and the rowan tree ;  
Swift and strong, keen and high, bear me away  
Where the heather grows red by the salt sea spray ;  
Bring the scent of the pines in my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
With honey scents from the flowery lea,  
'Tis over the mountains fain I would stray,  
Where the moon shines clear on the loch and brae ;  
Fair are the nights in my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
Bold, yet gentle, and full of glee,  
Like the sons of the Celtic race art thou,  
Fearless of eye, and of open brow ;  
Bring me the tones of my ' ain countree.'

Oh ! wild north wind, so fresh and free,  
Deep covered with snow though my own glen be,  
Wild the dark corries, and loud roaring linn,  
Warm-hearted the welcome awaiting within ;  
Ah ! fain is the heart for its ' ain countree.'



## A SONG OF PAIN.

I WOULD that they laid me down sleeping  
To rest by the western sea ;  
Where the noise of the world and its tumult,  
Would never come nigh unto me.

I would that the lark in the morning  
Would rise from his low heather bed,  
To sing in the light of the dawning  
A requiem hymn to the dead.

I would that the rushing of waters  
The pain in my heart might still,  
In the home I have longed to receive me,  
My home on the brow of the hill.

Sweet mansion of evergreen verdure,  
By heather or snow roofed in,  
The dreamless nepenthe of slumber,  
None else save thy guests may win.

After the wild, fierce tempest,  
After the beating rain,  
Storm on the outward headlands,  
Then—cessation of pain.

I would that they laid me down sleeping  
Where the river goes rushing by ;  
God's angel, who saw me cradled,  
Beside me to help me die.

God's angel, who saw me cradled,  
Carrying my soul away  
From the dreams and shadows of midnight  
To the light of eternal day.

I would that they laid me down sleeping  
Where God's heaven shines clear o'erhead,  
In the land where the mountain breezes  
Sigh, ' Peace to the sleep of the dead.'

## THE HIDDEN PATH.

IN every heart  
There is a part  
Known but to God alone ;  
One hidden path,  
Through verdant strath,  
Or choked with fallen stone.

The wandering soul  
Her weird must thole  
In silence and alone ;  
No foot may stray  
That hidden way,  
Whose windings are unknown.

Flowers may be there,  
Both rich and rare,

*The Hidden Path*

But known to God alone.  
We dare not pull  
The blossoms cool,  
For these are not our own.

Thorns may be there,  
Our footprints bare  
May leave a bloody track.  
We can but pray,  
We dare not stay  
To cast our glances back.

Death may be there,  
To do and dare  
Is but a soldier's part.  
Come woe or weal,  
God can reveal  
His strength within a heart.

Sin may be there  
With deadly snare,  
And souls in the dark may fall ;  
But courage still,  
In steadfast will  
Is the promised shield for all.

Love in the glade  
May droop and fade,

But death hath no power to sting.  
    Though the victor rave  
    By the open grave,  
Love hath a snowy wing.

    When the sacred seals  
    To the world reveals  
Each hidden sorrow and sin,  
    What dread surprise  
    May fill our eyes  
At the hidden paths within.

    That way so dark  
    May bear the mark  
Of radiant light above ;  
    The heavy cross  
    Of earthly loss,  
A cherished mark of love.

    The soul of light  
    We thought so bright  
May show the marks of death ;  
    Whilst some, misread,  
    May bear instead  
The martyr's crowning wreath.

    Oh ! should the path  
    Be shown in wrath,

*The Hidden Path*

What of the pitiful soul !  
A shivering leaf,  
From slumbers brief  
Awaking her weird to thole !

Jesus ! and Mary mild !  
Joseph ! protect thy child  
In that last and terrible day ;  
Leave not my sinful soul  
In pitiless loss and dole  
To wander from Thee away.

Out of Thy gracious sight,  
Out in the blackened night,  
To know that my lot was cast ;  
How could I bear to see  
Thy face and know for me  
That look—the last !

## THE SECRET OF THE LILIES.

THE red lamp's softened shimmer  
O'er the marble chancel swings—  
Warm roseate rays that glimmer  
O'er the sculptured angel wings ;  
The watching angels kneeling  
By veiled and sacred door,  
Folded hands so mutely pleading  
For their charges evermore ;  
And the white St. Joseph lilies  
Lying strewn upon the floor.

The silence lying unbroken  
Through the aisle so dim and vast,  
With lengthened shades betoken  
That the worshippers have passed  
Through the old cathedral portal,  
With the blessing still of prayer

Clinging round each happy mortal  
From the Sacred Presence there ;  
And the white St. Joseph lilies  
For the morrow's feast looked fair.

Through the silence and the darkness  
Crept a shrouded human form,  
Took her naked soul's grim starkness,  
With its wild, ungoverned storm,  
To the Mother of all sorrow,  
'Neath the shadow of the Cross,  
Nor recked the dreaded morrow,  
Or the soul's eternal loss ;  
Lying prone upon the lilies,  
Wild thoughts as breakers toss.

She heard no gentle pleading  
(Too loud the human strife)  
Through the silence interceding  
With the crushed and broken life :  
' For hours so swiftly fleeting  
To barter heaven's bliss !  
Long years of pain and weeping  
For one unhallowed kiss !'  
But the bruised St. Joseph lilies  
Heard the mocking serpent's hiss.



Behind her lay a loveless past ;  
    Before, the beckoning prize,  
The promised love for aye to last  
    That spake in those dear eyes.  
Farewell ! the poor weak erring heart  
    Sobbed as she stole away,  
Out to the great world's busy mart,  
    Wrapped in the shadows gray ;  
And the white St. Joseph lilies  
    All crushed and broken lay.

The old gray-headed priest looked down  
    Where crushed his treasure lies :  
Gazed with a grave and puzzled frown  
    Of mute and grieved surprise.  
But the flowers he loved and cherished,  
    With none their secret share,  
How a human soul had perished  
    In its grace and beauty rare ;  
The white St. Joseph lilies  
    Lying crushed and broken there.

Long years had passed ; the flowers  
    In the old priest's garden grew  
Tall with the passing hours,  
    And fairer to his view.

But a strange unsettled feeling  
No reason could control  
Came o'er his spirit stealing  
To pray for some poor soul,  
When the white St. Joseph lilies'  
Rich perfume o'er him stole.

One night he heard a sighing,  
As he knelt in prayer alone ;  
A woman, ill and dying,  
Came back to seek her own :  
The human soul that perished  
In its grace and beauty rare,  
And the pleading voice she banished  
Of the Sacred Presence there !  
But the white St. Joseph lilies  
On the altar glistened fair.

The long gray shadows falling  
From steeple, spire, and dome,  
The death-bell slowly tolling  
For a wanderer carried home.  
To sacred strains they laid her,  
With her kindred dust to rest ;  
The only tribute paid her,  
The lilies tightly prest—  
The white St. Joseph lilies,  
Lying broken on her breast.

## REGRET.

BEYOND all hope of healing,  
Past power of words revealing,  
Past fate's decree repealing,

Ah! wae is me.

In scorn I bade thee go,  
With studied speech, and slow,  
Lest traitor tears should flow,  
In losing thee.

How could I know that you  
I deemed as false were true?  
I held nor key nor clue

To tell me so.

How could I know that one  
Such bitter wrong had done,  
False heart and lying tongue  
Could stoop so low?

I see again Love's token  
Flung back with words unspoken,  
That told a heart was broken,  
    A life was lost.

O'er seas that evermore  
Surge white from shore to shore,  
I see 'midst breakers' roar,  
    A vessel tossed.

Past power of pardon's healing,  
Past memory's power of sealing,  
Past force of love's revealing,  
    A soul hath fled.

In vain salt tears are falling  
For love now past recalling,  
The sting of death forestalling,  
    Since thou art dead.

## THE ADVENTURE OF A SKYE TERRIER.

IF 'the best laid schemes of mice and men  
Gang aft agley,' as our poet hath said,  
Small blame should attach to the dog  
Who the same erring path should tread ;  
For the greatest and wisest of statesmen  
On occasions may lose his head.  
So, too much scheming and planning  
In man, or mouse, or dog,  
May land the brain of the schemer  
In a hopeless muddle or fog :  
As the scheme of a little Skye terrier,  
In the end to disaster led.  
Not that Charlie's scheme was not feasible,  
Well arranged, thought out, and admissible,  
That one might see at a glance.  
But great men tell us the key of fate  
Turns only for him who knows how to wait  
With patience attending his chance.

Forced away from a home he loved,  
    Small wonder poor doggie nursed his wrath  
When he thought of the rabbits he hunted  
    Through the green and verdant strath ;  
Or longed to retrace his footsteps  
    Down the old familiar path.  
But seas rolled in between, the way  
    Grew dim, confused and drear ;  
A journey first by boat, and then  
    The travellers' goal at last drew near.  
A new-found home and mistress,  
    And—a much-detested bath !  
Prick-eared, short-haired, of the very best  
Breed of Skyes that e'er was caressed,  
    Or proved his pluck by his scars.  
In his short stump tail and his grizzly face  
Grace or beauty you could not trace,  
    But a veteran tried in the wars.

So his pretty ways and his ugly face  
    Gained him many a friend in the stranger's land :  
Ill-tempered and crabbed to tramps and curs,  
    To his new acquaintance his manners were bland.  
Yet how little we know of the lives of those  
    Who eat our bread and walk by our side ;  
Whilst their heads are racked, and their minds are torn,  
    Down the current of life we see them glide ;

Ungessed the hole that has sprung in the ship,  
Till the waves come over the deck ;  
Then we wake to find sails, timber and crew,  
Dashed on to the waves a wreck.  
So Charlie the dog, obedient and good,  
Chewed the cud of reflection, as well as his food,  
In a manner unseemly and sly ;  
Thinks he, ' If I follow them out for a drive,  
To give them the slip I might easy contrive,  
And then to Lochaber good-bye !'

A tenacious will and a faithful heart,  
Qualities good in both man and beast ;  
When the struggling efforts success has crowned,  
Our admiration's of course increased,  
Though often the crown that we think to grasp,  
And the castle we built with care,  
Like the fairy Princess and briar bower,  
Melt into thin vapoury air.  
One day arrived when our hero's plan  
Took size, and form, and shape ;  
He followed his mistress with right good will,  
But the will was the way to escape.  
When two paths meeting diverge, Divines  
Point out that the broad too often inclines

To a steep and dangerous declivity.  
But dogs and men, as experience proves,  
Turn most to the left when they have to choose,  
With a most perverse proclivity.

Over the dry white road he flew,  
Like a ball of gray worsted wool ;  
One thought in his mind, a steamer to find,  
Showed a dog that was not a fool.  
Six weary miles he trudged, till at last  
The water came full in sight ;  
Slow puffing the smoke from a funnel arose—  
His tail curled high with delight.  
How he sneaked on board without paying his fare  
Is a mystery still unexplained ;  
No doubt as misdoers so often are punished,  
With the *mal de mer* he was pained.  
But alas ! the ship, although it was right,  
Was bound for the north, not the west, that night,  
So he overshot his mark.  
Poor doggie, instead of straight making for home,  
Was destined farther and farther to roam,  
And at stranger doors to bark.

That night there was weeping and wailing at home :  
Charlie was lost, or stolen, or strayed ;  
You might think the world to an end had come,  
Such a noise and fuss his mistress made.



Days passed and nights, but still no news ;  
Then a silence still and profound  
Reigned over that house—I knew 'twould be so  
Till that little Skye was found.  
But joy is nearest when oft we think  
Its fickle light for ever hath flown ;  
And when we deem it secure and safe,  
Leaves us nought but a vacant throne.  
Would you taste of the wild fresh joys of the hills,  
The lethe that lulls to oblivion all ills,  
Try a picnic in summer weather  
By the loveliest loch, with its wooded shore,  
A ruined castle, and streams to explore,  
Fringed with fern and purple heather.

In a quaint old inn so cosily hid  
By the waving boughs of a cedar tree,  
With smiling hostess, and parlour neat,  
There we sat awaiting our tea.  
Little we know what fate has in store  
In many a strange surprise :  
That hour our minds were full of nought  
But a drive 'neath the starlit skies.  
Below in the courtyard, sitting forlorn,  
A dejected form I espied ;

I called his name, he leaped on high,  
His short, quick barks replied.  
Questioned, our hostess told how one day  
Two dogs from a steamer had made their way  
Towards the inn as the daylight waned.  
Footsore and weary, dusty and lame,  
Like sensible dogs to the hostel they came,  
Where since they had both remained.

Now the dog or the man who never has seen  
In his inmost soul what a fool he has been  
Will never learn to be wise.  
So Charlie his wandering ways forsook,  
And homewards rejoicing his steps betook,  
Where, safely ensconced in the ingle-nook,  
On the lap of his mistress he lies.

### THE HARRIED NEST.

ON a whitethorn, low complaining,  
As if the little heart was breaking,  
    In plaintive notes of woe,  
O'er harried nest and stolen eggs,  
A robin redbreast pity begs  
    The passing stranger show.

Poor birdie, all the care bestown  
Upon thy humble nest o'erthrown  
    By coward skill ;  
The piteous, anxious hours of thought,  
Before the tiny house was wrought  
    With patient bill.

How oft I've learnt thy sweet content,  
In cheerful warblings heavenward sent,

Around me cling;  
Or watched thee careful preen thy breast,  
When first the eggs were laid to rest  
Beneath thy wing.

'Twould melt a very heart of stone  
To list a robin's chiding tone,  
When man has proved his foe.  
The sweet confiding, feathered thing,  
Who shares the crumbs we careless fling  
In winter's snow.

How could the hand so cruel be  
To snatch thy pretty eggs in glee,  
Whilst thou, bereft,  
In humble, questioning protest raise  
Thy voice 'gainst man's deceitful ways,  
Unpunished left?

If want of heart as well as head  
Approved the deed that soul was dead  
That could inflict such pain.  
Love for God's vast creation best  
The love for God Himself attest,  
And gentle thoughts attain.

If sympathetic tears can ease  
Thy piteous plight, or loving please,

I'll tame thee as my pet.  
No cruel cage to cramp thy wing,  
But near my casement sometimes sing  
    When thou hast ceased to fret.

To roam at will through summer hours,  
Dive deep in shaded wood and flowers,  
    Or skim the laughing burn.  
Perchance, when I have deemed thee lost,  
In winter's bitter cold and frost,  
    With confidence return.

How oft the charms of learned skill  
Have failed to bend my stubborn will,  
    Or move to better part !  
But hymn of praise it ne'er withstood  
From thee, wild songster of the wood,  
    To raise both mind and heart.

Ye little feathered friends of man,  
We know not where in God's great plan  
    Your future home is laid ;  
But this we know, in love and trust,  
To end for aye in mouldering dust  
    God's creatures ne'er were made.

## ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE DOG.

My little friend, I sadly miss thee,  
Nor shame to think my tears should flow ;  
For truer friend, more trusted comrade,  
Never more my heart can know.  
More than human in thy friendship,  
Lacking only human vice,  
And that worldly-wise affection  
That demands its fullest price.

All thy winning ways I ponder,  
The trustful sympathy that lies,  
Without the need of words, imparted  
In loving paw and truthful eyes.  
Did sorrow's wing but lightly brush me,  
With glance responsive thou wert near ;  
Caressive, mute, yet pleading gesture,  
' Though all desert thee, I am here !'

Oh ! our wild young days together,  
As we scampered o'er the hills ;  
Laughing at the warning shadows  
Fate's prophetic night fulfils.  
We were far too free and happy  
In our own sweet mountain air ;  
Too fleet of foot to be o'ertaken  
By the cruel harpy Care !

You were bent on chasing rabbits,  
I on chasing thoughts as wild ;  
For I dreamt our earth was heaven,  
Holding angels undefiled.  
Well, we had our joyous innings,  
And we made the ball to fly,  
As glee together we went batting  
O'er the heather, you and I.

Through the years we passed together  
Changeful days we both have seen ;  
Through each phase of fickle fortune  
Truest comrade hast thou been.  
Other friends may rise unbidden,  
Act a true or treacherous part,  
Just so long as fancy dictates,  
All unlike thy faithful heart.

My little friend, I sadly miss thee,  
    And I look around in vain  
For the comrade, loved and trusted,  
    Freed from our poor life of pain.  
Man's fatal sentence thou art sharing,  
    For sin in which thou hadst no part ;  
Death's chilly hand lies cold, unsparing,  
    On thy true and faithful heart.



## LOCHABER NO MORE !

‘The Spaniards were very fond of the Highlanders. One of the latter, Donald Macdonald, overcome by solicitations, had almost agreed to remain at Buenos Ayres ; but whilst wavering, one of his comrades sung to him “Lochaber no More !” The effect was irresistible : the tears started into poor Donald’s eyes, and wiping them away, he exclaimed, “Na, na, I canna stay ; I’d maybe return to Lochaber nae mair.”’—*Journal of a Soldier of the 71st.*

SILENCED the cannon’s deadly roar,

The trumpet’s sudden call to arms ;

But aye there lurked a danger still

In dark-eyed maidens’ subtle charms.

There languorous night and midnight star,

Soft tinkling lute or light guitar,

The Highland soldiers thrill.

‘Stay with us, stay !’ a dark-eyed maiden sung,

‘Oh ! stay with us by Buenos Ayres’ shore ;

Forget, forget the cold and frozen North,

Nor leave us, nor leave us evermore !’

Out on the bay the troopship rides,

His comrades all depart ;

Forgotten now his native land,

Enthralled both mind and heart.

His chosen comrade loudly rates,  
In vain against his heart debates.  
Old ties, old friendships all withstand,  
For, hark ! the mellow lute :  
' Oh, stay with us by Buenos Ayres' shore ;  
Forget, forget the North for evermore ;  
For frozen peaks on high, the dark-eyed Lola's sigh,  
Nor leave us, nor leave us evermore !'

No word his comrade spake the lad,  
But looked out to the North ;  
With folded arms he stood apart,  
Then clear he whistled forth  
Lochaber's own lament so sad,  
The wild adieu to snowhills clad,  
Till ached his hearer's heart.  
' Na, na !' he cried, with choking sobs ;  
' Farewell, thou foreign shore ;  
I canna bear the thought that I  
May return to Lochaber no more.'

## ABSENCE.

THERE is an absence in the heart  
    When those we love are far away ;  
A sense of loss, as when the night  
    Descends upon a summer's day.  
The evening breeze a message bears,  
    Fraught with the memory of departed hours ;  
New vernal wreaths young Cupid wears,  
    Whose perfume lingers on the flowers.

There is an absence in the heart  
    When those we love are dead ;  
The stars of God, serene and calm,  
    Keep holy watch o'erhead.  
The lily flower to earth low weepeth,  
Wet with the dews o'er love that sleepeth ;  
Slow riseth up, her cup o'erflowed,  
And pointeth to his bright abode

There is an absence in the heart  
    When those we love turn cold ;  
As when the chilly mists descend,  
    And mountain flocks enfold.  
The sea hath a sound, heard in the night,  
    Like to such voiceless pain ;  
Wild waves of hope that ebb and flow  
    Back to the heart again.

‘ORAN DO MHAIRI NIGHEAN IAN BHAIN’

(BARD TO THE CLAN MACDONALD).

FRESH as thy native streams,  
Glancing with golden gleams  
Caught by the sunlit beams,  
Clear and pellucid.

Out on the northern breeze,  
Songs of the western seas  
Pour from thy heart with ease,  
As birds produce it.

Heather and tartan gleams  
Flash through thy varied dreams,  
Renewing our cherished themes  
With thy sweet songs.

Long may thy life be spared,  
Thou who so bravely dared  
Raise thy wild voice uncared  
'Gainst bitter wrongs.

Through the dark clouds of pain,  
 Midst the storm's blinding rain,  
 Must the soul ever gain  
     True inspiration.

By the sad, troubled past  
 Poetry's spell was cast,  
 Claiming her own at last,  
     Sweet invocation.

As the sun's changeful tint  
 O'er the jagged Cuchullins glint,  
 Thy songs on the heart imprint  
     Nature's romance.

Through thy wild glens so lone,  
 Gray rock and mossy stone,  
 In grand confusion thrown,  
     Poets entránce.

Birds, as ye northward fly,  
 Swift with my message hie ;  
 To the bright Isle of Skye  
     Greetings I send.

Tell her the spell we own,  
 To 'Sassanach '\* and 'Gall '† unknown,  
 The charms of the Gaelic tone,  
     Highland hearts blend.

\* English.

† Lowland.

Bard of Clan Donald's choice,  
Harp of the silver voice,  
Bid each true heart rejoice  
Over thy fame.

Honour and praise be thine,  
Happiness o'er thee shine,  
As the quiet years decline,  
Loved be thy name.

‘AN COMUNN GAIDHEALACH.’

ON THEIR SECOND MÒD.

FORWARD ! the lads of the kilt and the feather—  
Forward in peace, as the red ranks of war ;  
Shoulder to shoulder, no stranger can sever  
The bonds that unite us both near and afar.  
Though alien chiefs may contrive to divide us,  
Usurping the lands and the names that they own,  
We acknowledge no leader save he who can bind us  
By love that to clansmen and country is shown.  
The love of the Gael for his high-crested mountains  
Deep-rooted lies hid in the heart of each man ;  
True lovers of music, of song and of dancing,  
No matter the name or the badge of his clan.  
Then, forward ! the red and green tartans together ;  
In love, peace, or war be they foremost for ever.



Gather, each man of the clan he holds dearest,  
 Gather from mountain, and city, and glen ;  
 The fair, graceful maid with the sweet-sounding *clarsach*,\*  
 The poet most favoured 'mongst children of men.  
 Gather the clans, for the pibroch is sounding  
 High o'er the mountains and valleys of Lorne ;  
 Gather true Highlanders dressed in the tartan,  
 With the badge of each clan the brooch to adorn.  
 From the wild, rocky shores of the far-distant islands  
 Bring the songs and the lilts of the echoing seas ;  
 From the depths of the steep and heather-clad mountains,  
 The hush of the storm and the wail of the breeze.  
 Forward ! the lads of the kilt and the feather ;  
 In music and song be they foremost for ever !

Welcome to all the true Highlanders gathered !  
 Each bearing a proud and a time-honoured name,  
 In art or in science, in peace or in battle,  
 Wherever a leaf has been added to fame.  
 Macdonalds, Mackenzies, Mackays, or Macgregors,  
 Camerons, MacLeods, or Campbells we praise,  
 For the thrill of true pride and pleasure they gave us  
 Wherever the fame of the Highlands they raise.  
 Our soldiers—the glory that circles our banners,  
 In danger 'Aye ready !' most daring in deed ;

\* Ancient Scottish harp.

The wide floating plaid, and the high feathered bonnet,

The last to retreat—the foremost to lead !

' Second to None,' sons of Scotia for ever,

Shoulder to shoulder, advance, lads, together !

## THE BURNIE.

SWIFT rushes the streamlet by yonder fair glen,  
The home of the fawn and the haunt of the wren ;  
In crystalline dewdrops the rose on her spray  
Discloses her heart to its rippling lay ;  
And the rowan tree, bending red berries to lave,  
Lists the music of Paradise sing in the wave.

The lark in the morning soars high with the mist,  
Borne up on its billows to summits new kissed,  
With the roseate flush of a newly-born day,  
Like the touch of true love chasing sorrow away.  
The silver of promise and sunlight of hope  
Speak out from those waters and green mossy slope.

Each bird of the forest, entrancingly sweet,  
Would mingle in chorus with thee to compete.  
E'en the dainty-winged swallow, and low-humming bee,  
Seem gayer whilst coursing the hillside with thee ;

Bright, sparkling, thy waters fall over in play  
To the deep-haunted pools of some kelpie or fay.

The sweet-scented air from the heath can impart  
A rest to the weary, a balm to the heart.  
In the hush of the gloaming, light gossamer leaves  
Float over the woodlands in fanciful wreaths.  
Our dreams with the colours of heaven are wrought ;  
We grasp at the shadows long eagerly sought.  
Once more we are listening to words that were said  
Before the white daisies had covered our dead ;  
For memory hath lifted the veil of the past,  
And the spell of the mountains upon us is cast.

Adown the long shadows the present hath fled,  
And the visions of childhood around us are shed ;  
Once more we can feel the wild bounding of joy,  
As we sped by the Spean, or red turbid Roy ;  
Once more we can see the proud crest of the ben,  
Where nestles the eagle, secure against men.  
Again o'er the pine-covered hills we may roam,  
Where the kelpies disport in the cataract's foam ;  
But the dreams we have whispered the burnie alone,  
Must remain in its bosom entrusted—unknown.

## A SOLDIER'S MESSENGER.

ONLY little daisies, a chaplet white and red,  
You've plucked for me, my darling, out of their dewy bed.  
You wonder at the tear-drops that stain their tender  
leaves ;

How canst thou know the anguish their simple sweetness  
breathes ?

Oh ! part the blossoms quickly, to earth the red ones  
strew ;

The white at least were spotless before they took that  
hue—

Ere a young life ended early, in the height of his renown,  
And the pipers played so gaily as they marched from  
out the town.

\* \* \* \* \*

The strains were carried softly far on the midnight air,  
Where stalwart youth and beauty moved in graceful  
rhythm there.

'Midst the young hearts, all so joyous, stood a maiden  
dressed in white,  
Whilst a deep and tender shadow shone within her eyes  
that night.

A loving voice is pleading for a little flower—'tis all !  
'Twill be a messenger,' he said, 'if in the fight I  
fall.'

And next his heart he placed it—a snowy little star—  
To waft dear thoughts of her he loved amid the din of  
war.

One little year. A soldier, with saddened step and  
slow,  
Sought out the maid his comrade loved, and told his tale  
of woe.

'No braver spirit fought,' he cried ; 'no truer heart  
that day !  
And how he loved thee till the last, he bade this flow'ret  
say.'

Once snowy white, now changed the hue, bathed in the  
royal tide  
That freely flowed, for Scotland's fame, from out a hero's  
side.

Ah, dear ! the power that lay within that little humble  
flower

To change a laughing summer's day to midnight's darkest  
hour.

Oh! part the blossoms quickly, to earth the red ones  
strew ;

The white at least were spotless before they took that  
hue.

### A DREAM FACE.

I SAW your face, and you saw mine,  
As dreamers meet in a dream,  
Or the great blue stars of heaven  
Reflect their light in a stream.  
I heard those rich, soft tones as if  
With mingled pleasure and pain,  
As the song of the thrush at even  
Thrills the soul with her plaintive strain ;  
Or a tear that rises unbidden,  
So vague and unreal it seems—  
The face I felt that once I had loved,  
The face I see in my dreams.

I saw the form of a little child  
With the step of a bounding roe,  
And the firm, lithe limbs of the Celtic race,  
O'er torrent and streamlet go.



Dark, wind-swept curls o'er a classic brow,  
Wild gray-blue eyes beneath,  
Lit up as the sunbeam glances through  
A tarn the dark rushes wreath.  
I saw the salt, fresh waves leap up  
To kiss two children at play,  
Where the honey-scented heather grows,  
Many a mile away.

\* \* \* \*

Hark ! the sound of the trumpet-call !  
Helmet and breastplate bright  
Flash with the dash of the cavalry charge,  
In the rays of the morning light.  
Over the trampled field they break,  
Wheel to the right, the left,  
As a mountain torrent in spate comes down  
Through rock-bound channels cleft,  
A dream, and only a dream, said I,  
That soul to soul inclines.  
Oh ! perfect face of classic mould,  
Sweet mouth with the tender lines.

Champing bit and rattling chain,  
Coal-black steed and waving plume,  
Passed as pictures pass in the brain,  
Or colours wrought in the weaver's loom.

The wearied snort and the loosened rein,  
    With the train of troopers passing away,  
Changed to a dewy Highland glen,  
    And the form of a little child at play.  
The scent of the birch and the wild-rose bloom  
    Clustering thick on the river brae ;  
Twilight glints on a mountain tarn,  
    A rare, sweet smile, more grave than gay.

\*           \*           \*           \*

I saw your face, and you saw mine,  
    As dreamers meet in a dream.  
But which was real—the life of to-day,  
    Or the evanescent gleam  
Of a thought that passed from soul to soul,  
    Unuttered, yet oh ! so sweet,  
As a star looks down from heaven's blue night,  
    In a stream its image to meet ?  
Lights and shadows of troubled dreams,  
    Ye pass with the passing strife,  
Awaiting the last great trumpet-call  
    To awaken the dreamer to life.

### COMRADES.

THEY were a little lad and lass,  
    Playing in childhood's glee ;  
He with a bold and sunny glance,  
    A very angel she.  
Up they climbed to the mountain steep,  
    And ever 'twas he who led ;  
Decking her hair with the wild sweet rose,  
    And her neck with the berries red.

The summer has fled from the fair hillside,  
    The flowers sleep under the snow ;  
The ice lies cold on the river-bed,  
    Though the waters run below.  
But no spring sun shall arise to melt  
    The ice o'er his heart forlorn ;  
Alas for the love that can never change,  
    For the love that must live—and mourn !

She has left him climbing the hills of life,  
But her spirit is by his side :  
He is the weak one who lags behind,  
And she is the cheering guide.  
The soldier sighs as he stands at his post,  
Scenting the heather from over the sea ;  
And through paths of ice, with an aching heart,  
He thinks of a dream that can never be.

## SUNSET.

FLY home, ye loitering song-birds, fly !  
The day is closing, night is nigh ;  
Ere fades the red light in the sky,  
To the forest-shelters hie.  
Ere wakes the hawk, whose hideous scream\*  
Disturbs the sleeper's airy dream,  
As high within his casement nook  
He scans the air with murderous look,  
Fly home, ye loitering song-birds, fly !  
The day is closing, night is nigh.  
Seek not through danger's path to roam—  
Outspread those tiny wings—fly home !

Fly home, ye little footsteps, fly !  
Closed is the daisy's sleepy eye.  
The hour is late, the dew is falling,  
And the woodland dove to her mate is calling ;

\* The night-jar.

The lily is nodding good-night to the rose ;  
What the river is murmuring on as it flows,  
Of a song to be sung to a starlit sea,  
Only the wandering night-wind knows,  
And the rustling leaves of the aspen tree.  
Fly home, ye little footsteps, fly !  
Love's arms around thee folded lie :  
From mimic dance of sprightly gnome,  
Fly home, ye little ones, fly home !

Fly home, long-waiting soul, fly home !  
The waning light hath well-nigh flown.  
Fold thy hands upon thy breast :  
The day is over, take thy rest.  
Farther than the streak of dawning,  
Far beyond the sounds of mourning,  
In thy guardian angel's keeping,  
Gently close thine eyes in sleeping.  
That sun, whose feeble rays now gone,  
His last on earth for thee hath shone.  
Open wide the prison door ;  
Christian soul, on pinions soar ;  
See, bright Azrael brings release !  
And for pain, eternal peace.  
Fly home, long-waiting soul, fly home !  
The waning light hath well-nigh flown,  
And thou must journey forth—alone.  
Swift through the gloomy night fly home !

EXAUDI NOS DOMINE !

LAUDATE Dominum !

Is the cry of the child in its glee,  
With never a cloud in the heavens,  
And never a frown on the sea.  
The little bark is drifting,  
While its sails gleam white as snow ;  
On, on to life's restless ocean,  
And its tossing waves of woe.

'Ora, Mater, ora !'

Is the trembling cry of the maid,  
While her hopeful love on the altar  
Like an altar-flower is laid :  
The flower has bloomed, and the petals  
Are scattered far on the wind ;  
But down in the depths of the calyx  
Is the cross that is left behind.

‘Miserere Domine!’

Is the cry of repentant age,  
As it studies the book of its failings  
In many a sin-stained page ;  
And the prayer calls forth the waters  
From his Saviour’s outstretched hands  
Till white, as in spotless childhood,  
The pardoned sinner stands.



## WITCH-LIGHTS !

GRAY, wind-swept skies o'er a barren moor,  
The curlew's cry and the wild linn's roar,  
White-flecked waves on a sullen shore,  
    But the distant lights of a home shone there.  
Dauntless, bold, 'neath a starless sky,  
Vain hope still points to a shelter nigh.  
Stay, traveller, stay ! for the false lights die.  
    Witch-lights ! witch-lights !—beware !

The song of the lark on a fair hillside,  
Wild, scented thyme, and a glorious ride,  
With a promised bride for a lifelong guide,  
    Ah ! youth and love, how fair !  
The stars shone true in the heaven's blue night,  
He saw but two mocking eyes so bright,  
A strong trust given for a love too slight.  
    Witch-lights ! witch-lights !—beware !

Out on a barren moorland, cold,  
Death's pitying arms a form enfold ;  
Silent and white, with tale untold,

    A wearied traveller lay.

Cheerless, alone on life's rough sea,  
Drifting out—for no hope had he—  
Where the sunk rocks lie, and the storm-fiends cry,  
    For, ah ! witch-lights betray !

## THE BALLAD OF LADY ANN.

‘COME hither, come hither, sweet Lady Ann!  
‘Come hither,’ Nurse Merran said;  
‘For the troop-ship rides at the Port of Leith,  
To draft the lads of the Highland Brigade.  
With fife and drum, to the pipes they come,  
Flying streamers, and tartan gay.  
But the bonniest man who walks in the ranks  
Is your old boy-lover, they say—  
Your true love Ronald, now grown to a man.’  
And ‘I know it well,’ said the Lady Ann.

Man to man they marched abreast,  
The drums rolled out and the pipers played;  
But many a tear and many a sigh  
Followed the lads of the Highland Brigade.  
A fair face looked from a latticed height  
To a dark bronzed face below,  
Till the tears rolled down on the lady’s cheek,  
And the soldier went white as snow.

‘White and sad,’ Nurse Merran said, ‘white looks the  
front-rank man ;’  
But the lady turned aside her head, and ‘I cannot see,’  
said the Lady Ann.

Broad and fair were the baron’s lands,  
By meadow and flowing stream,  
And stately halls were his to own  
Where the shimmer of diamonds gleam.  
He had given them all, in the pride of his life,  
For the love that was ever denied ;  
Or the smile that ne’er was seen on the face  
Of his fair young bride till she died.  
‘Hard and cold is the price of gold, sweet Ann,’ Nurse  
Merran said,  
As she laid a spray of the wild white rose on a heart  
whose price was paid.

## WHEN MISTS LIE LOW.

WHEN mists lie low and shadows fall  
    Across the day-dreams of thy youth ;  
When pleasure's bright allurements pall  
    Before the solemn light of truth ;  
When dim and sad at twilight hour  
    The night-birds skim the sobbing sea,  
If hearts turn cold or tempests lour,  
    Or peace on spreading wings will flee—  
Then heart, true heart, remember me.

The smiles you give in noon's high day,  
    Though dear as sunshine's brightening ray,  
May stray alike o'er weed and flower  
    As transient as the fleeting hour.  
Keep smiles and laughter for the crowd—  
    The lightsome mood may such enthrall ;  
But thoughts that wake 'neath sorrow's shroud  
    Our truest friendships oft recall :  
When mists lie low, remember me.

Light passing friendship soon departs,  
Nor leaves behind a lasting sting ;  
But love that from our childhood starts  
A thought of truer friends may bring.  
The glamour when the day was young  
Enshrined within the heart remains,  
As music, though the lute, unstrung,  
Lies mute, its former tone retains :  
When mists lie low, remember me.

When bay the hounds in hot pursuit,  
The fox will seek his hidden lair ;  
When loud o'er heather moors the bruit  
Of levelled guns the game will scare,  
The feathered coveys seek the hills,  
Far from the trodden paths of men ;  
So thou, when earth thy yearning chills,  
Wilt seek again thine own loved glen :  
When mists lie low, remember me.

## THE PLEA OF THE WILD FLOWERS.

EVENING falls athwart the moorland, silvery voices from  
above

Seem to whisper through the flowerets silent messages  
of love ;

'Tis the hour when naught save feeling, banishing the  
hours of day,

Holds the heart in still communing, thought and reason  
lose their sway.

Thus methought I dreamt a spirit spake from out the  
quiet hours ;

Gliding through the fitful moonbeams, rose the angel of  
the flowers.

I wondering asked, 'Art thou the guardian of this moor-  
land, stretching fair,

Or thy sweet mysterious tending only for the bluebell  
there ?

Are the daisies not thy children, heathbell fair and  
violets sweet,

And the many mountain blossoms springing up  
beneath thy feet ?

Then it answered, ' These my flowerets are, my love  
they each may claim ;

Mine to guard their tender petals on the hill and on the  
plain.

' Mortal, I have seen the harebell bent beneath the  
roughest gale,

When the sturdy oak was riven from his shelter in the  
dale ;

But I scarcely feared the storm-fiend, though I knew his  
powers for ill ;

Well I knew my gems too lowly for the trial of his skill.

' But I shuddered when a footstep lightly brushed the  
blades of grass,

And a loving tone low murmured, " Floweret, thee I may  
not pass."

Then I heard it woo the harebell, and it bore my gentle  
flower,

With a radiant smile of triumph, where it withered in an  
hour.



' There its petals gently closing, and its little life had fled  
E'er the world had ceased to wonder o'er the beauty it  
    had shed ;

Love had rudely culled it, blooming, but to minister to  
    pride,

And when'er it died and faded cast it carelessly aside.

' But I marked where it had fallen, 'mid the festive and  
    the gay,

And I raised it, crushed and broken ; there my darling  
    might not stay.

Then I heard the flowerets weeping, and my heart was  
    troubled sore ;

Down the raindrops fell in sorrow, for the saddened fate  
    it bore.

' Mortal, thou hast rarer blossoms, reared beneath thy  
    careful hand ;

They can stand the glare and glitter that would fade  
    my little band ;

They will deck thy bridal tresses, sweetly will they glisten  
    there ;

Then why covet these poor blossoms when thine own  
    ones are so fair ?

‘Spare the heath upon the mountains, leave the daisy in  
the vale;

Let them live their days of sunshine, soon will come the  
blighting gale.

And when thou art worn and wearied with the world’s  
cold care and strife,

Mine to deck thy lowly pillow when ye seek immortal  
life.’

## BROOM IN MAY.

PRETTY Maud at her casement sat,  
While daddy dozed in his old armchair,  
The dying sunbeams lingering played  
On the golden brown and the silvered hair.  
Clinking, clattering, a horseman bent  
Out of the gathering twilight gloom,  
At his saddle-bow strapped the golden broom  
He tossed with a laugh through the sunlit room.  
Pretty Maud went white and red,  
As she threw the gay broom right out, and said,  
' Ah ! broom in May ye may rue for aye,  
Sure trouble and sorrow attend its stay ;  
For broom in May, so the old folk say,  
Will sweep the head of the house away.'

Nothing the gallant said, but smiled  
At the pretty maiden's idle fears ;

Yet he helped to scatter the golden broom,  
And to chase from her eyes the falling tears.  
Clinking, clattering, a horseman went  
Riding out 'neath the starlit night.  
Alas, for the dove in the hawk's keen flight!  
And the desolate hearth without cheer or light!  
Daddy wept as he turned to the west,  
And prayed for the child he loved last and best.  
' Ah! broom in May ye may rue for aye,  
Sure trouble and sorrow attend its stay;  
For broom in the hands of a gallant gay  
May sweep the pride of a home away.'

NEVER AGAIN, LAD !—NEVER AGAIN !

AWAY where the foaming breakers roar  
And the wheeling seagulls cry,  
Loud raged the bitter wailing blast  
That swept the angry sky ;  
Red shone the heather and rowan tree,  
Out to the salt-spray waving free ;  
Red shone the tartan plaid and warm,  
Both plaid and heart 'gainst the rising storm.  
But never again, lad !—never again  
By winding river or sounding sea  
Shall we meet in the gloaming, you and me ;  
Never again, lad !—never again !

The fires were lit and the muskets piled,  
And the night lay moist and chill ;  
The soldiers were dreaming of love and home,  
Loud blew the trumpet shrill.

186      *Never again, Lad!—never again!*

‘To arms!’ ‘To arms!’ rang the night alarm;

    ‘Shoulder to shoulder!’ each comrade’s cry.

Dear God! was there none could be better spared,

    That the bravest and best should die?

Ah! never again, lad!—never again

    By winding river or seagirt shore

    Shall we meet where oft we have met of yore.

Never again, lad!—never again!

## THE NEW INVASION.

(WRITTEN FOR THE CELTIC UNION, EDINBURGH.)

ENCIRCLED by thy purple hills,  
Thy sheltered vales and wooded rills,  
Fairest of cities, classic fame  
And classic form hath earned thy name ;  
Where winds the Forth through devious ways  
The modern Athens there reflects her rays.

Each Doric or Corinthian pillar crowned  
Bear witness to thy past renowned ;  
Each time-worn stone a record holds,  
Historic glamour round thy castle folds,  
Where, high embattled, shot and shell  
Through many a siege impotent fell.

Triumphant the entry for our King,  
And for the Prince, loud acclamations ring.

The Stuart reign, the white cockade,  
Thundering proclaimed the cannonade.  
The white rose and the thistle blent,  
Too soon by rival factions rent.

Since then a new invasion comes  
In guise of art, and Mars' resistless sons ;  
Where kilted warriors to the pipes' appeal,  
O'er High Dun-édin sets the Celtic seal.  
The famed brigade whose heroes brave  
To Scotia's brow fresh lustre gave.

In realms of art the Celtic fancies play,  
As glints of light upon the mountains stray ;  
Cradled on Nature's breast, rich store,  
Drawn from the fountain-head of mystic lore,  
Tinges the changing sea or autumn sky  
With that mysterious ' Stir, and song, and sigh.'

In those hard paths of scientific light,  
How oft the Celtic genius solves the right  
Where length of prosy doubt prolonged  
Had failed to penetrate beyond !  
Then dark ravines of thought concealed  
In depths of grandeur stand revealed.



Terpsichore's fair votaries have part  
Beside the muse's gentler art.  
In grace of motion still the Celts excel,  
How easy thus the mountaineer to tell !  
Freedom of gait and independent air,  
A natal gift, the kilted gallants bear.

Fairest of cities, fairer may'st thou be  
When Celtic art its glamour casts o'er thee,  
And colder elements give place  
To aims its warmer sympathies embrace,  
Nor kindred race from distant climes exclude,  
The Celtic Union all include.

So may the Celtic Union find  
In proud Dun-éidin welcome kind ;  
Wherever classic learning lives,  
The names we read new lustre gives.  
In every branch the Celtic trace  
Lends fire and new pathetic grace.

## PASSING FOOTSTEPS.

FOOTSTEPS, hurrying footsteps, I can hear them as  
they go—  
The gay and lightsome footstep, the saddened step and  
slow,  
Treading close upon the heels of Time, swift passing to  
and fro,  
Till the lamps shall cease to flicker and the stream of  
life to flow.  
Oh, footsteps! it is not alone the pavement that you  
tread,  
But the hearts of those lone watchers who wait and  
weep o'erhead,  
Listening ever for a footstep that from home and love  
hath fled,  
Unknowing if yet living or if numbered with the  
dead ;  
Those pitiful heart-throbbings, that suffering intense,  
That rings its cruel changes through the single word  
'suspense.'

Footsteps, little footsteps, that on earth have ceased to  
play,

I can hear them pattering by me, arrayed in white are  
they ;

By the open gates of memory, stealing through they find  
a way

To rest within the mother's heart at the closing of the  
day.

When the hour is hushed and silent, toil and trouble  
laid aside,

Shadowy wings of night descending, their footsteps  
softly glide ;

Like sentinels they take their stand, bid peace within  
abide,

Whatever else of care or grief within their homes  
betide.

Footsteps, angel footsteps, on the threshold where you  
rest,

Though lone the heart bereft of you, be sure that home  
is blest.

Footsteps, passing footsteps, that we never more may  
hear,

The light, familiar tread of those we held so fondly  
dear ;

Out through the gathering darkness, where the shimmering  
lights appear,  
We may press our faces wildly 'gainst the window-panes  
and peer  
O'er the heaving human mass below ; sad eyes may seek  
their own,  
More lonely that amidst a crowd so helplessly they  
roam ;  
But the stranger footsteps passing leave us watching still  
alone  
For the step that never more may cross the threshold of  
our home.  
Footsteps, echoing footsteps, it is not on stones you  
tread,  
But the quivering chords of hearts entwined with  
memories of the dead.

Footsteps, dear loved footsteps, that once trod the  
heather brae,  
How far apart our steps have wandered now for many a  
day !  
Shall we never stray beside the loch, or 'neath the  
shadows gray  
Steal out to play at ' Hide-and-seek ' beneath the moon's  
bright ray ?

I can hear the peals of laughter every moment merrier  
grow,  
Hear the mountain torrent rushing, feel the heather  
breezes blow,  
As our eyes with pleasure sparkled, and our cheeks were  
all aglow,  
Down the glen of silver birches hand in hand we used to  
go.  
But fainter, ever fainter, sound the footsteps hurrying  
past,  
Whilst some on flowery meads and some on desert plains  
are cast ;  
And eyes grow dim with watching, anxious hearts are  
beating fast  
For the sound of those loved footsteps that must surely  
come at last.

Footsteps, hurrying footsteps—ah ! how many pass  
away,  
Through the silence and the darkness, and we dare not  
bid them stay ;  
We see the ships that bear them setting sail, and wave  
farewell,  
As o'er our void and aching hearts tolls Hope's prophetic  
knell.

So the stars above grow dimmer, seen through a mist of  
tears,

And life has lost the brightness it wore in childhood's  
years.

Yet the lights still flare and flicker, and the steps pass to  
and fro,

Though we miss the music sadly of one step we used to  
know.

Those swift, unconscious messengers keep treading o'er  
the ground,

Unknowing they for whom in joy or grief those steps  
resound.

## A NORSE LEGEND.

THROUGH the wide and open portal  
Streamed a long, bright trail of light,  
Clanking glasses, merry voices,  
Ringing out the Christmas night.  
Dark the pine upon the mountains  
'Gainst the pure, untrodden snow,  
Where the Lorelei was singing  
In the hoarse Norwegian flow.

'Skael !'\* the hardy Norsemen shouted,  
Till the oaken rafters rung,  
And the silver tankards clattered  
To the ancient sagas sung.  
To the entering guest 'Welcomen,'  
With the hand-clasp, firmly rung ;  
Kindly greetings, kindly spoken,  
In the soft Norwegian tongue.

\* Equivalent to the Gaelic word 'slainte,' a health.

Clear and cold the frosty heavens,  
Bright each scintillating star,  
Shining with a Northern lustre  
From the deep blue-sky afar.  
'Peace on earth,' the angels whispered  
Through the crisp and starlit night ;  
And the brilliant meteors falling  
Caught the message in their flight.

'Skael !' the hardy Norsemen shouted,  
'Speed our parting soldier guest' ;  
But a blue-eyed maiden whispered,  
'Till the early morning rest ;  
Dark the shades upon the mountains,  
Darker shadows in my heart  
Warn thee, Carl, to stay thy going  
Till the hours of night depart.

'Danger lurks upon thy pathway ;  
Hark ! I hear the ravening wolves,  
And the yellow moonlight streaming  
Blood-red in my sight revolves.  
Women's instinct, never failing,  
Past the power of reason hies ;  
God-directed comes the warning  
When from woman's heart it cries.'



But the blue-eyed soldier, smiling,  
    Bent his haughty, regal head,  
With the tender lovelight shining  
    For the maid he hoped to wed ;  
Gathered, with a loving pressure,  
    Two small hands against his breast,  
Holding them with proud possession,  
    As he thus the maid addressed :

‘ Lille Karen ! Lille Karen !\*  
    Could I love thee half so well  
If my plighted word, being given,  
    At a word thou couldst dispel ?  
Honour, that a soldier values  
    More than life, or love, or fame,  
Holds me to the promise spoken  
    In a true-born Norseman’s name.

‘ Ere the early dawn hath risen  
    O’er yon distant snow-clad peak,  
Where the midnight sentry paces,  
    I the countersign must speak ;  
Through the clear and frosty heavens,  
    Bright although the stars may shine,  
I shall feel the light that guides me  
    Are those starlit eyes of thine.

\* Little darling.

*A Norse Legend*

' Fear and I have long been strangers  
    (Troth, I never knew his face !),  
And before this glistening comrade,  
    Even ravening wolves give place :  
Sword of Karl the Old—'twas riven  
    From his clenched and dying hand  
By the conquering Viking Olaf  
    And his wild marauding band.'

As the crystal drops are frozen  
    That have flowed throughout the year,  
When the Frost King's icy chariot  
    O'er the mountain streams appear ;  
Cold as that same king's embraces,  
    Icy hands upon her heart  
Froze the tender tears in falling,  
    As the maid saw hope depart.

But the rich, red blood was flowing  
    In the slender, blue-lined veins—  
All the Viking's pride of honour  
    That fair northern bride retains ;  
With a gentle courage yielding,  
    Saw the long and slender ski\*  
Tied with winding thong securely,  
    O'er the frozen surface flee.

\* Norwegian snow-shoe.

'Skael!' the hardy Norsemen shouted  
At the wide and open door,  
Till the bright-eyed soldier, turning,  
Kissed his hand in love once more.  
Dark the pine upon the mountain,  
Casting shadows on his path,  
And the prisoned kelpie growling  
Low beneath the ice in wrath.

Now upon the fiord careering  
Light upon the frozen snow,  
Now across the white plain swinging,  
With the young blood all aglow ;  
Kerulf's wild, pathetic music  
Ringing out upon the air,  
In those tones that Norsemen only  
With Israfil,\* the seraph, share.

Seemed as if the sun-god Balder  
Stepped from out his sculptured mould,  
With the broad white forehead gleaming  
'Neath the clustering curls of gold.  
Swift the skis went racing onwards,  
But a shadow deep 'as night  
Followed o'er the snow-clad surface,  
Silent in its deadly flight.

\* 'The angel Israfil, who has the most melodious voice of all God's creatures.'—Sale.

*A Norse Legend*

Hark ! the short, sharp yelp of hunger  
    Bursts upon his startled ear.  
' 'Tis the wolves ! ah ! bah !' the laughter  
    Sounded o'er the forest clear.  
Longer, darker grows the shadow  
    Panting fiercely on his track ;  
Near and nearer, fireballs gleaming,  
    And the pointed ears laid back.

' Fünf ! the stealthy steps come closer.'  
    Out the glittering rapier flashed !  
Face to face, the gallant soldier  
    Waited till the foremost dashed  
'Gainst the steel of Karl the Olden,  
    And the pure white snow grew red,  
With the sturdy sword-arm aching,  
    From the numbers of the dead.

Baffled howls of fear and anguish  
    As the assailants slunk away,  
Greet the brave young victor hurrying,  
    Laughing on his onward way.  
Back the sword of Karl the Olden  
    Dropped within its trusty sheath,  
And the firwood skis went dashing  
    O'er each ice-bound, frozen wreath.

Dark the pine upon the mountain  
    'Gainst the pure, untrodden snow ;  
But the Lorelei was singing  
    In the hoarse Norwegian flow.  
'Skael !' the hardy Norsemen shouted,  
    Far away by household fires,  
Where a maiden form is kneeling,  
    Praying as the night expires.

Hark ! again those howls of malice,  
    Gleaming eyeballs, sharpened teeth !  
And the panting, heavy breathing  
    Rhyming with the pats beneath.  
Drops of frozen blood congealing,  
    Exhumed from out the matted fur,  
Enflamed the howling mob to madness,  
    From some wretched, wounded cur.

Swift and swifter raced pursuers,  
    But the brave young soldier fled  
As yon winging grebe is skimming  
    O'er the frozen fiords ahead.  
'Once again, my trusty comrade,  
    Flash from out thy scabbard swift !  
God in heaven ! my hand grown feeble,  
    That my sword I cannot lift ?'

*A Norse Legend*

Now may all the angels watching,  
And thy fair Norwegian maid,  
Pray thy God above to shield thee,  
With thy stiffly-frozen blade !  
Wet and dripping from the combat,  
In the cold, clear, frosty air,  
Reeking blood had glued the scabbard  
To the trusty sword-blade there !

Ten long miles before him lying,  
Ten long racing miles with Death !  
And the howling hounds are gaining,  
Till he hears their rushing breath.  
Silenced even the short, sharp yelps,  
Lending semblance still of fright,  
Hushed as if some instinct told them  
Death was with the pack that night.

Onwards ! onwards ! Racing forward  
Till the veins stood out like cords,  
And the pine-clad hills and valleys  
Raced beside him o'er the fiords.  
Shooting darts of blood, half-blinding,  
Filled the clear and honest eyes ;  
As a stag at bay is hunted,  
Straining every nerve, he flies.

Not the dark, Norwegian forests,  
Not the pack of howling wolves,  
Casts that grim, relentless shadow—  
Death ! the race with thee resolves.  
Cruel fingers, stretching forward,  
Almost grasp the firm, white throat,  
And the pale blue colour shining  
On the gaily-braided coat.

Onwards ! onwards ! Ah, dear Heaven !  
Slow and slower grows his pace.  
Now, the bounding wolves are on him !  
Yet he meets them face to face.  
Meets them as a soldier, fighting  
To the last with death and pain,  
Till the great dark shadow falling,  
Blotted out the snow-clad plain.

Sword of Karl the Olden ! wherefore  
Art thou mute within thy sheath ?  
Oh for one swift stroke unerring  
Of the force thou didst bequeath !  
Deeper, deeper grow the shadows—  
Ah, dear God, where is he now ?  
Gallant soldier ! noblest spirit !  
Lying dead upon the snow.

And they sought him in the dawning,  
At the maiden's earnest prayer ;  
Sought, and found the reddened snowdrift  
Found what once was living there.  
Then they spread the soldier's mantle,  
Till was hidden from their sight  
What had once been Carl the noble,  
Done to death that Christmas night.

And they brought her back the only  
Tokens that were left to bring :  
The frozen sword of Karl the Olden,  
With the gold betrothal ring.  
Mute, they handed her the relics,  
But no word they found to say,  
As the hardy Norsemen shuddered  
In the garish open day.

Silently she took the tokens,  
Kissed and held them to her breast,  
With a mute appeal to Heaven,  
Ere she sank in death to rest.  
Dark the pine upon the mountain,  
White and pure the untrodden snow  
Where two loving hearts are cradled  
By the hoarse Norwegian flow.

THE END.

*Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.*