

—THE—

Harp of Strathnaver,

A LAY OF THE

SCOTTISH HIGHLAND EVICTIONS,

AND OTHER POEMS.

—:O:—

BY CHARLES STEWART,

GALT, ONT.

1884

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PREFACE.

It is somewhat remarkable, and, I often think, much to be regretted, that no writer of note has ever undertaken to supply through the press, a full and unbiased narrative of the Scottish Highland evictions. Such a work would, no doubt, be highly interesting to many on both sides of the Atlantic, and likewise of importance as a historical record of the cruel dispersion of an ancient, patriotic and heroic race of people. It is indeed true that several authors, in severe paragraphs, have given expression to their feelings on the subject. But anything like an embodiment of all the interesting, though unpatriotic, and frequently appalling circumstances is, so far as I am aware still wanting; nor is the following poem intended to supplement the deficiency, in writing which, my chief object being to deliver myself of an emotional burden, and record my abhorance of the cruelty and injustice inflicted on the Scottish Highland peasantry by their ejection from the very hills and glens among which, for thousands of years, their fathers had lived and died, and who, in accordance with both moral and legal justice, were the only real proprietors of the soil, it having descended to them through many generations, from their forefathers who had never been disinherited, neither by conquest nor by contract. And in consideration of the agrarian excitement prevailing of late in the Scottish Highlands, I have thought it expedient to bring my Harp before the public, hoping it will find an echo in many hearts.

THE AUTHOR.

1884

ERRATA.

Page 22, Verse 4, Line 3, for *to* read *the*.

- | | | | |
|-------|------|------|--|
| " 26, | " 4, | " 3, | " <i>happy</i> read <i>haply</i> . |
| " 32, | " 2, | " 2, | " <i>bild</i> read <i>beild</i> . |
| " 43, | " 3, | " 2, | " <i>attired</i> read <i>altered</i> . |
| " 72, | " 1, | " 2, | read <i>in vain</i> . |
| " 76, | " 4, | " 1, | " <i>keeps</i> <i>snowing</i> . |
| " 81, | " 1, | " 2, | for <i>on</i> read <i>in</i> . |
| " 82, | " 1, | " 7, | " <i>save</i> read <i>safe</i> . |

ARGUMENT.

Callum Graham, Son of a Highland Crofter on the Sutherland estates, in the district of Strathnaver, shortly after being married went to sea, as mate in a Trading Vessel, which, with the crew, was made captive and retained for a number of years by a Pirate. After a long absence, and without ever having heard from home, he returns buoyant with anticipations of a joyous greeting from wife and parents, but on his arrival finds his father's place unoccupied and desolate, and the last of its inmates, a vagrant boy, whom he discovers to be his own son; and by whom he is informed of the fate of his father's household and the death of his beloved wife, the boy's mother.

Donald Gray, late proprietor of the Village Inn, now an inmate of the Poor house.

Tavish, present proprietor of the Village Inn, successor to Donald Gray.

Angus, employee at the Poor house, whose duty is to admit visitors and to transmit messages to officials or inmates, as the case may be.

Part First.

In days now long past, ere Evictor the First, *
In avarice of pride, had unpeopled the place,
The vale of Strathnaver for ages had nursed
A God-fearing, loyal and peace loving race.
One of whom, Callum Graham, young, stalwart and brave,
Having mated in wedlock with fair Helen Gray,
That she, his beloved, more comforts might have,
And more than a Cotter's wife be ; he one day
As mate in a trading ship sailed far away—
When enriched he'd return, was the promise he gave.

Now buoyant with hope, his soul teeming with love,
To the place of his childhood he fondly returns,
And in fancy beholds, lit with smiles from above,
The scenes of his youth, o'er which memory burns.
He recks not, alas ! of what time with the years
Has entombed, he sees not the void that is there,
And hastes to embrace whom affection endears ;
But, lo ! at each step some old charm disappears,
Until hope disappointed gives place to despair.

* Duke of Sutherland.

Callum—"Hail Scotia! Hail my native land!
Again I'm on thy hill-girt shore!
And though long exiled from thy strand,
Yet absence has endeared thee more!
Thy every cairn, glen, stream and lake
Youth-hallowed memories awake.

"My soul thirsts for thy native lore,
My tongue thy accent still retains,
Each scene my eyes now travel o'er
The paradise of youth remains:
Of every form and every heart
I feel as if I were a part.

"And trees there are in yonder grove,
O'ershadowing a primrose bed,
The sponsors to our childish love
When Helen's heart with mine was wed!
And every cliff in yonder height
A record is of past delight.

"In far off lands 'neath warmer skies,
Where luscious fruits and spices grow,
And landscapes in less wildness rise,
And streams in smoother currents flow;
Though myrtle groves perfume the air,
Yet life is ever languid there.

“ And I have supped the savoury meal,
And quaffed in turn the Virgin wine,
But soon to me their sweets grew stale—
Enjoyment never has been mine
Since last I breathed thy mountain air,
And dined upon my native fare.”

Here from beneath his vest he took
A locket, small yet fair to view,
On which with fondness he did look,
And smiling said—“ Yes she is true !
And ‘twas the pirate’s dire escort
Our mutual intercourse made short.

“ And better ‘tis she never knew
Of my long reticence the cause ;
How that our gallant ship and crew
Were captive made by sea-outlaws ;
If she has had misgivings, they,
When I arrive, will pass away.”

Again he paused and upward gazed
Afar into the brightening sky,
And like one blissfully amazed,
Upon a speck he fixed his eye,
And thus, with new delight impressed,
The object of joy addressed.

“Blithe singer ! soaring in the skies
And raining melody on earth,
To me thy song all strains outvies
That ever gave an echo birth ;
Yea, I could almost bend the knee
In my delight, and worship thee.”

But while he gazed, with outspread wing
Descending towards whence it rose,
The wary lavrock ceased to sing,
When nearing where its brood repose ;
Still Callum, in a trance-like mood,
The thing of joy adoring, stood,

Till back to earth he glanced his eye,
Attracted by the sparkling stream,
That under shade had rippled by,
Now glistening in the morning beam ;
On which a look he fondly cast,
And hailed, thus, as it murmured past.

“Sweet streamlet ! harper of the dell,
Thy numbers in my bosom start
Remembrance of my first farewell,
And fond outpourings of each heart ;
Which then did thoughts of bliss alloy ;
But soon shall be a theme of joy.

“ Here ofttimes has my bosom swelled
With rapture, whilst, ere ought did grieve,
With Helen I fond converse held,
Or mused alone at close of eve :
The birken bower I yet can trace,
That shaded our first fond embrace.

“ And still to me, though long exiled,
No change appears ; each scene replete
With grandeur smiles as then it smiled ;
Gay dewy flowerets kiss my feet,
While lavrocks warble in the sky
Anthems of sweetest minstrelsy.”

To one who has long absent been,
Whose soul no sad regrets annoy,
'Tis pleasing to traverse the scene
That sacred is to youth and joy :
No shadow of remorse or care
Is recognized by memory there.

There's in life's chain a link of gold,
A work of the creative Hand,
That every where doth clasp and hold
The pilgrim's heart to native land ;
And which, the farther he may roam,
Endears the more his distant home.

And now on rising ground afar,
Surrounded with embowering trees,
Attractive as the morning star
To lonely shepherd's gaze, he sees
And hails aloud, o'ercome with joy,
The hearth that knew him when a boy.

“ Ah! yonder stands my father's cot,
Why starts the tear into my eye?
For me there's welcome there, I wat,
And my return will kindle joy:
My mother, whom I most revere,
Will greet me with a smile-led tear.

“ While father gravely will inquire
What useful knowledge I have gleaned;
Nor will my tale, I wat, soon tire
Of distant lands, and things not ween'd
In pleasant's lore—for tedious night
A theme of marvel and delight.

“ O, but to hear each kindred Voice,
And press again the plighted hand
Of her, love's first and only choice!
Endearments that give native land
Its secret charm, and soothe to rest
The fears that plague an absent breast.”

Now suddenly he listening stands,
As if restrained by welcome sounds ;
But something from within commands
And forth again away he bounds ;
While at each onward step appear
Things of delight for eye and ear.

All nature smiling greets his view,
And seems to woo him for a guest ;
His path the grateful flowerets strew
With perfume, and to shaded rest
Inviting, arbors ope' around
Of green turf-seat with ivy crowned.

The ferny bank, the wood bine bower,
Mementos of youth's sinless glee,
The cove where once at midnight hour
Weird sisters held strange revelrie,
He sees but scarcely deigns to heed,
For nothing now may check his speed.

And still his quicken'd pace seems slow,
For as he nears his father's place,
His heart burns with a filial glow ;
The foretaste of a dear embrace ;
And while his soul joy captive makes,
He with himself, thus, silence breaks.

“ Hope, sovereign of the human heart !
Thou to enjoyment soon must yield
Thine empire ; not that we shall part,
But that thou mayest be revealed—
Transformed to actual, present bliss,
Apart from all contingencies.

“ The Avenue its bosky arms
Now opens to receive—Ah, me !
To mock me—something there alarms !
Things are not as they used to be ;
The garden, once my father’s pride,
Seems now his skill and care denied.

“ But he who wears the silvery crown
Of venerable, toil-worn age,
A lack of energy must own
In tasteful labor to engage ;
And hence the changes that deface
My father’s once well tended place.

“ Yet things there be in age that please :
There’s angling in the summer brooks,
Or in retirement’s place of ease,
The calm companionship of books :
Songs of the Bards, and sacred tomes,
The light and joy of rural homes.

“ And thus engaged I now may find,
 With sage-like patriarchal pride,
To his less active state resigned,
 The mentor, at his own fireside,
Of virtue, harmony and skill—
A father and instructor still.

“ My Helen too, perchance, is there
 For she and mother were as one—
Methinks I see them start and stare,
 And hear—‘O Callum ! Husband ! Son !—’
But joy is heightened by surprise :
I’ll enter with sedate disguise.

* * * * * *

“ What meaneth this ! where have I strayed ?
 Can I ? indeed I must be wrong ;
Things have unreal impressions made,
 Misleading as I passed along ;
Ah, no ! *here* mother plyed her wheel,
And *there* hung father’s rod and creel !

“ Alas ! alas lone empty walls !
 A family hearth, a stranger’s home
Now desolate, to ruin falls.
 O, Heaven ! let it be my tomb ;
Dear father, mother, Helen, where ?
Ah ! silence mocks at my despair !”

With many a lingering look and tear,
Disconsolate he turns to go ;
Moved by alternate hope and fear,
And grave anxiety to know
If they in life will meet again ;
Or has he sought his home in vain.

To stand upon one's natal hearth
Alone, and look on its decay,
And there behold our place of birth—
The very room where mother lay,
And where the little crib was kept,
In which in infancy we slept ;

To see the little painted shelf,
Whereon the sacred word was laid,
Above where father leaned himself
On easy chair, or kneeling prayed,
All overlaid with fold on fold
Of loathsome spider-webs and mould.

While every token, every trace
Of human occupant is gone ;
No kindred voice, no fond embrace
Doth welcome back the absent one :
Thus Callum's joy such scenes forestall,
While silence mocks his quest withal.

And with uncertainty oppress'd,
Upon his heart a shadow lies;
Hope stricken dies within his breast;
The light of joy fades from his eyes,
And brooding o'er defeated aims
With trembling accent he exclaims:

“ My eyes grow dim and well they may,
To look upon my place of birth;
Here solitude and grim decay
Seem revelling in silent mirth;
Which sadly indicates that whom
I seek are tenants of the tomb!

“ Oh! can it be that I have roamed
In lands of uncongenial clime,
And where the ocean-breakers foamed
As if in eagerness to chime
Their sounds of elemental strife
With man's last agonies of life,

“ That I by industry might earn
Means competent for wedded life;
Which gained, I, now returned, but learn,
From seeming evidences rife,
That years of peril I have sped,
To bring an offering to the dead!

“ Alas ! that fate should e’er dispense
Joy to evaporate in tears
Binding in anguish and suspense
The love and hope of many years !
Still, ceaseless now shall be my quest,
Till of this change I know the rest.

“ And yonder angling in the burn,
A boy who of it all may know ;
His tale will, peradventure, turn,
Or stay the current of my woe :
It may be father, though remote,
Now occupies a larger plot.

“ My little lad, pray can you tell
Me aught of yonder empty cot ?
Where those who were its inmates dwell ?
Have they obtained a larger plot ?
Or what inducement made them shift,
And leave so much of toil and thrift ?”

“ Yon cot, good sir, my grandsire owned
Frae manhood until bent wi’ age ;
But fate upon his grey hair frowned,
And scaith he couldna then engage.
They’re now a’gane—I’m left, ah me !
In yon kirkyard their dwellings be !”

“ And what calamity first brought
Distress upon your grandsire's hearth ?”

“ Good sir, there came a summer's drought ;
And then a scarcity and dearth :
There came, besides, the laird's court-day,
When few their bygone rents could pay.

“ And they wha'd through the blight been spared,
Ne'er thinking warse might them betide,
Were hameless made :—it pleased the laird
The Crofter's claims to set aside—
He fired the cots to light, the while,
Their path to ruin and exile.

“ And whare ilk blackened spot appears,
Sad tokens o' the scaith that's been,
Around their burning hearths in tears,
The hapless wives an' bairns were seen ;
And there our lads, brave though but few,
Withstood a while the heartless crew.

“ My uncle dear, our only aid,
Wha rowed the coble, tilled the plot,
And as my grandsire often said,
Was the main pillar o' the cot,
Last in the skirmish did remain,
And wi' a baton stroke was slain !

“ O’ercome wi’ grief the auld folks then
When him a bleeding corpse they saw,
Withouten whom they could na fen,
Fell sick and daily dwined awa :
And sair they grieved ere they could dee,
For what was to become o’ me.

“ And I wha’d been to them a joy,
The blithest laddie o’ the glen,
Am now an outcast, vagrant boy,
And shunned by a’ the boys I ken ;
A lown fence neuk my only hame,
And named a disrespectfu’ name.”

“ Without a guardian or a home,
A waif on public mercy cast,
In aimless idleness to roam,
And be a vagabond at last !
Is there none left of kin to thee ?
Your father—who, and where is he ?”

“ My faither ! sir, he’s far awa ;
Ere I was born he gaed to sea,
To earn what gowd wad busk a ha’
His and my mither’s hame to be ;
He ne’er returned—my mither’s gane,
And I am left my leefu’ lane !”

“ My son, my son, my orphan son !

My last, my only *endearing* tie of life !
Full soon, I trow, hast thou begun
To know the cares of want and strife :
Still, though thou hast been homeless left,
Thou’rt not of kindred all bereft.

“ Thy father lives to soothe thy woe ;

With thee I’ll every blessing share,
And thou wilt help me to forego
Such grief as driveth to despair :
The love, the wealth, I did opine
Would be thy mother’s now are thine.

“ Then take thy stranger-father’s hand,

And lead me to thy mother’s grave ;
A tribute does that grave demand,
And a fond tribute it shall have.”
Perhaps she died of broken heart—
O, wherefore did we ever part !

Alas ! that death should ever blight

The early blossoms of the heart ;
And change the garden of delight
Into a waste—from joy apart—
Where love and memory still meet,
But with a wail each other greet.

Ye shades of the lamented dead !
Frequenters of the heart bereaved,
Whence love's last message dove is fled,
And by illusive hope deceived,
My present with my past endear,
O, be my soul's companions here !

“ All mute, my son, let us approach
The silent holdings of the dead ;
Let no discordant sounds encroach
On the solemnity and dread
That by the grave are held in trust,
And hover o'er a parent's dust.

“ Ah ! this is where your mother lies—”
Dear Helen, Helen, Helen dear !
O, could I raise thy death-bound eyes !
O, could I ope' thy death-shut ear !
Or clasp thee to my aching breast,
And sweeter make thy changeless rest !

Alas ! the captivating glance
That sparkled from thy love-lit eyes ;
To fond embrace wont to entrance
Our hearts with unforbidden joys
Are but endearments of the grave,
That memorize the bliss they gave.

Yet scenes in which our souls once burned,
Time never shall from mine efface ;
And in my widowed heart inurned
Shall be thy name and every grace ;
And my last throb of life shall be
A tribute to thy memory.

And though no monumental bust
With strange devices has been reared,
To mimic sorrow o'er thy dust,
Yet goodness has thy name endeared,
Which still a monitor may prove,
And wayward hearts to virtue move.

Though 'tis an awful thing to die,
When guilt-begotten fears enslave,
And conscience points the inward eye
To things revealed beyond the grave ;
Yet calmly could I lay me down,
And make my Helen's shroud my own.

What are the terrors of the grave,
Save to the conscious-guilty one,
Whose crime-begotten fears enslave
His soul in fetters all its own ?
Here the oppressed, and seared of mind
From suffering an asylum find.

The ills of poverty and age ;
The scourge and fetters of the slave ;
All perils that mankind engage,
Cease to have being in the grave ;
Still dire prospective woes it brings
To whom a guilty conscience stings.

When by the foe of life pursued,
At bay on time's mysterious brink,
There captured, vantageless, subdued,
And being's dregs impelled to drink ;
As mirrored by his hopes or fears
Futurity to man appears.

'Tis then religious hope beholds
The halcyon dawn of endless bliss ;
'Tis then philosophy unfolds
Of wealth and power the nothingness.
The sceptred despot and the slave
Have equal honors in the grave.

O, grave ! thou favored spot of earth
That hold'st my treasure ! let this tear
On every flower thou bring'st to birth
My hearts memorial appear ;
And when those flowers their blooms have shed,
O, then, enclose it with thy dead !

“ Come now, my son, let us go hence
That we may rest some roof beneath,”

“ Sir I’ve a house ahint yon fence,
And that I made o’ moss an’ heath ;
In it ye’re welcome to a share
Of breckan bed and orphan’s fare.

“ But ablins though ye’ve travelled far,
It may be by baith land an’ sea,
Fate ne’er has gi’en you sic a jar
As what she gave to mine an’ me ;
Sae wadna like the night to pass
’Neath roof o’ heath on bed o’ grass.”

“ My son your heath-built house no more
Will you inhabit, night nor day ;
Your reputation I’ll restore,
And place you in a mansion gay ;
No more your feelings will be torn
By poverty or haughty scorn.”

“ Kind sir, I’ll ne’er can recompense
Your goodness, if you such bestow.”

“ My son, it is enough that hence
You name me father—let us go,
For night with grey the welkin streaks,
And clouds are resting on the peaks.”

“ Your pardon, sir, what you now crave,
To name y^e father, is to me
Like stealing something frae the grave,
O’ ane wha aye revered should be ;
But when wi’ you I’ve made my hame
My tongue shan’t stammer on the name.

“ And I will ever be to you
An aydent and obedient son ;
Whatever daurg be mine to do,
The task I’ll neither balk nor shun—
Please name the place of your repair,
And let me take your bundle there.”

“ Straight to the village be our way,
Where ‘neath the roof of some kind host,
Perhaps with good old Donald Gray,
Your mother’s kinsman, once the boast,
Of kindness to benighted guest,
We for the night may sup and rest.

“ And Donald’s heart will glow, I ween,
To bid me welcome, and condole
My grief, while happy, I may glean,
Of those sad happenings the whole
Event ; which, when minutely told,
May wrongs to be redressed unfold.

“ Ah, yonder ! I once more behold—
Rude relic of a godly race—
The Chapel, venerable, old,
Come on my son, let's mend our pace :
Come on ! the village chimneys, too,
Each step are rising into view.

“ 'Tis said the present time is ours ;
But now methinks the past is mine,
For boyhood scenes—life's holiest hours—
Start unimpaired from memory's shrine,
And almost make me fondly deem,
That manhood has been all a dream.

“ Familiar still is every spot ;
The croft, the holm, each shrub and tree,
The manse, the school, the mill and cot,
All seem as they were wont to be
When first impressed on memory's chart
With youthful ecstasy of heart.

“ And there old Donald's taper burns,
To cheer the drooping hearts of those,
Whom fate with cold indignance spurns,
In need of shelter and repose ;
And little weens he—best of men—
Who waits his welcome phrase : “ Come Ben.”

Tavish—" Good evening sir, what do you want ? "

" Good sir I want to be your guest,
Pray give permission."

" Sir I can't."

" I'm weary and in need of rest ;
And came of purpose by this way
To pass the night with Donald Gray."

" You must a stranger be, I trow,
To look for such a person here :
Old Donald has his quarters now
Within the Pauper-house, and there,
Even Tramps sometimes get pauper cheer—
We never do keep vagrants here."

" No vagrants here? My God ! O save
From insult, whom fate has bereaved !
Let not the echoes of the grave
Inform the dead of hope deceived,
And of the still uplifted hand
That with privation smites the land.

" Surround me with the shades of night !
And with the darkness of the tomb
Conceal Strathnaver from my sight,
That I may trace of poortith's doom,
And Ducal violence no more—
My dream of happiness is o'er.

“ Now has the fruit from hope’s fair tree,
Ere tasted, withered in my hand,
I lately deemed no one could be
A stranger in one’s native land ;
But like a wavelet in a stream
Hath vanished my illusive dream.

“ When last yon setting sun arose
And checkered all the hills with gold,
I wist not then that evening’s close
Would unto me such scenes unfold :
No more I’ll joy in prospects fair—
Hope is the handmaid of despair.

“ O Scotia ! have I lived to prove
Such wreck of nobleness in thee ?
And must I cancel from my love
The place of my nativity ?
Have I, indeed, to thee returned,
But as a vagrant to be spurned ?

“ This morning, in the twilight grey,
Swift as the breeze I skimmed the waves,
And reaching land by break of day,
Enraptured sought, Ah ! not their graves—
My father’s cot, my mother’s cheer,
My Helen ever, ever dear.

“ But most appalling is the change
That here records the lapse of time ;
Now prostrate homes or dwellers strange
Tell of oppression leagued with crime—
Of households driven to and fro,
Strewing the waysides as they go.

“ Poor shreds of one great broken heart !
Of home and self-reliance shorn,
Doomed evermore to live apart,
And brook servility and scorn,
Thus reft of any prospect, save
Some mock asylum or the grave.

“ Alas ! that thrift should thwarted be
To pamper Avarice—that man
The dregs and crusts of penury
Should dare administer to man,
With god-like potency—’twould seem
On martyrs’ graves that patriots dream.

“ No more the hillside and the green,
As used in other days to be,
Are hallowed by the frequent scene
Of heart-dilating gayety ;
The song, the pibroch and the dance
No more the gloamin hour enhance.

“ No more the Sabbath song of praise
Awakes the echoes of the glen,
Responsive to the sacred lays
Of faith-inspired, God-fearing men ;
They but report, from steep to steep,
The cry of grouse and bleat of sheep.

“ Whilst they who of the glen and heath
Had toiled to fertilize the soil,
That youth might ease to age bequeath,
Despite their years of anxious toil,
Dispersed have been, in grief to roam,
And seek in other lands a home.

“ O, could I but a will infuse
Into the hearts that inly bleed,
They yet another course should chuse :
As suppliants they would not plead ;
But with united prowess strong
Would sternly combat every wrong.

“ From Ducal arrogance, the while,
Would purge and purify the land,
Till power on poverty should smile
In kindness, proffering the hand,
Of help, not that of force imbrued
With blood and tears of the subdued.”

Chagrined, benighted and repulsed,
 Resentment rankling in his breast—
His heart with grief anew convulsed—
 Tired, and without a place to rest—
He, disappointed, finds anon
Hope's visions banished one by one.

And now their journey they retrace,
 Straight to the orphan's heath-made bild,
There to repose a Little space,
 Until returning day doth yield
Them light, and then their course will be
To find a ship and put to sea.

END OF PART FIRST.

Part Second

Aurora in her robes of dawn,
Now trips the mountain summits grey,
To strew fresh verdure o'er the lawn ;
And of her radiant sister Day,
The glowing drapery to unfold,
Enwrought with tints of green and gold.

The lark, sweet herald of the morn,
Has left his couch upon the lea,
And far on dewy wings upborne
Into the blue ethereal sea ;
There with a heart-breathed votive lay,
Salutes the goddess on her way.

In opening flower-cups charged with dew,
The Zephyrs dip their airy wings,
And fragrance on her path-way strew :
Her anthem every streamlet sings,
While bird and bee of every name,
Her coming joyously proclaim.

She comes ! the halo of her smile
Dilating brightens all below ;
But, oh ! a spirit-voice, the while,
Re-echoes from the depths of woe,
That living forms no eye can see,
Where human votaries should be.

No cottage chimneys yielding smoke
Are seen upon the landscape here :
No stir, no crowing of the cock,
No morning hymn arrests the ear ;
But intermingling shadows faint,
A scene of scattered ruins paint.

The ruins of once humble domes,
To frugal industry allied ;
Of peaceful peasantry the homes :
The patrimony and the pride ;
Whose every prostrate, crumbling shred
Records the exiled and the dead.

To youth-endearing haunts—still dear—
After long absence to return,
Is oft as now, alas ! 'tis here,
In bitterness of soul to mourn ;
And all prospective bliss forego
To sojourn in the vale of woe !

The eye may revel in the charms
Of native landscape, and the ear
Be soothed with melody ; but forms
Long imaged in the soul and dear
As monitors to joy and love,
When gone the heart fails to approve.

The absent one comes but to be
A disappointed pilgrim, here ;
And from his native Strath to see
Revered endearment disappear :
He comes enamoured of the past ;
But from the present shrinks aghast.

Bound by the ties of love and kin,
To dear ones now asleep in death ;
Fond, bleeding memories within
Assail his heart at every breath ;
While disappointment rears its crest
Where hope lies buried—in his breast.

* * * * *

Callum—"Again the dawn delights the view ;
But, Oh ! how changed since yestermorn,
The lavrock singing in the blue ;—
The linnet warbling in the thorn—
Again invite the infant day,
But hope's fair visions—where are they ?

- “ O, is it but in grief to stand
And gaze upon the wrecks of home,
That I have sought my native land,
In foreign parts no more to roam ?
Was it for this I bade adieu,
With buoyant heart to ship and crew.
- “ It is appalling thus to be
Alone, and where of late hath been
The stir of industry, to see
Blending their shadows with the scene,
Black mouldering hearths, which sire and son
For generations called their own.
- “ My youth's fair paradise ! although
By lordly avarice destroyed,
This heart is full of thee, and woe
Be unto those who have enjoyed
Their chalice, brimming with the tears
Of peasantry, in recent years.
- “ When far upon a distant strand
I sojourned, oft with lingering gaze
I looked towards the ocean, and
With heart devotional would raise,
My thoughts to heaven and pray that I
Might here return to live and die.

“ Meanwhile in pleasing revery
 Would homeward wend, o'er fields and stiles,
Till by the light of memory
 My soul, enrapt, beheld the smiles
Of friendship, and in thought did prove
The ecstasy of nuptial love.

“ Now I am with thee ! not to feel
 The fond hand's pressure, and receive,
Such welcome as alone can heal
 The wounds of exile ; but to grieve
O'er my bereavements, and bewail
The ills that in the land prevail.

“ Not to fulfil by filial aid
 The contract of parental love :
Ah ! not to be more happy made,
 And conjugal enjoyments prove ;
But dearest memories to wed
With ghastly ruins and the dead.

“ I'm with thee ! thou hast had my tears ;—
 I love thee ! but the spirit's gone
Of thy endearments ; coming years
 Shall greet me in another zone,
Where, though beneath less genial skies,
I'll have a home with living ties.”

“ Awake, my son, arise ! ‘tis morn
All vocal are the hills and trees,
The dewy blossoms of the thorn
Breathe healthful fragrance in the breeze,
Whilst echo blends from hill to hill,
The bleat of sheep and song of rill.

“ And on our journey we should be—
This night the ship may anchor weigh
That is to bear us o’er the sea,
And I’ve resolved, betide what may,
To see old Donald ere we go
And hear his tale of weal or woe.

“ So let us forth—without delay
We must the Pauper-house trace out ;
But haply you can lead the way,
As in your wanderings about,
A place so notable, I ween
You must have heard of—may have seen.”

“ O yes sir, I can lead the way,
And gladly will I be your guide.
And O, be kind to Donald Gray,
And bring him to your ain fireside ;
‘Twad cheer his heart—I ken fu’ weel
He doesna like the pauper’s biel.

“ He does not like the pauper’s biel
I heard you say, how can you tell
What he dislikes? and that he’d feel
Relief with an old friend to dwell?
Is such the gossip of the place,
Or has he told you face to face?”

“ When a’ my kith an’ kin were dead,
And no ane left for me to care,
His roof, his table an’ his bed
He kindly bade me come an’ share:
And cost on me he never spared;
He clad an’ schooled me like a laird.

“ But when the heart wi’ ruth o’erflows
It whiles wi’ sorrow floods itsel’;
And what were Donald’s after woes
Is mair than glibbest tongue might tell;
Of a’ his gear the feck he gave
The neediest o’ the poor to save.

“ And when he had nae mair ta gi’e,
He some ane’s ruin to prevent,
Did bind himsel’ security
For sundry debts an’ byegane rent;
Which at the term, O, sad to tell!
Brought grief an’ ruin on himsel’.

“ The bills came due—the debtor fled,
And Donald's things were roupit aff ;
He couldna even save his bed,
His bible, nor his Sunday staff ;
So without scrip, or bed, or bield,
Like outlaws we were forced afield.

“ And being then owre auld for wark,
Owre proud to beg, yet couldna want,
And aye the outlook growing dark,
At last he took the parish grant.
We to the house together sped,
As pauper's to be lodged an' fed.

“ And aye sinsyne we've been apart,
Forbid ilk ither's face to see,
And though what sorrows wring his heart
Nae tongue has e'er revealed to me ;
Yet what I suffered there mysel'
Does Donald's state owre truly tell.”

“ What you there suffered ! is it then
A place of punishment for boys,
Who have not where withal to fen,
To wean them from accustomed joys?
Or rather do not inmates fret
For privilege they cannot get ?”

“ O sir think kindly o’ the poor !
They are na pauper’s wi’ consent,
And what they in the house endure
Is cause enough for discontent ;
While scant an’ course their daily fare,
Of jibes an’ frowns rowth is their share.

“ But yonder on the rising ground,
Its shadow stretching far below,
In prison fashion walled around,
You see the place where poor folk go ;
And haply you may learn when there
What inmates suffer, how they fare.

“ And as a guide to show the way,
Nae farther ha’e ye need o’ me ;
Sae your return wi’ Donald Gray,
I’ll wait, an’ rest beside this tree.”

“ Come on your presence will endear
Our interview. Why tarry here ?”

“ It’s no that I hae aught to fear ;
But when frae bondage I did flee,
I vowed a vow wi’ heart sincere,
Ne’er while I live to pass this tree,
My joy then triumphed o’er despair,
But forged a fether unaware.

“ For fain would I to Donald rin !
 And I could cheer him up I trow,
 But some unrestfu’ thing within,
 Keeps teasing me about my vow ;
 What perjured sinners hae to dree—
 Sae dinna seek me past the tree.”

* * * * *

Though somewhat loth to go alone,
 Now Callum houseward threads his way ;
 Foreplanning what may best be done
 To make a home for Donald Gray ;
 A home that neither Duke nor Knave
 Shall wrest from him this side the grave

And with a competence endowed,
 To meet his still recurring wants ;
 And give him comforts not allowed
 The aged poor in Parish grants ;
 Which project kept his mind elate,
 Until he reached the entrance gate.

Angus—“ Well, sir, pray what is your demand ?
 You visit at an early hour.”

“ Good sir, the business I’ve on hand
 Requires despatch—if in your power,
 Please let me talk with Donald Gray.”

“ O yes, sir, just come on this way.

“ But if a private interview
Be your desire I'll bring him forth ;
And what shall I report of you.”
“ Say I'm his kinsman from the north.”
“ Good morning Donald—how's your health ?”
“ Guid morning sir, it's like my wealth.”

“ No to be braggart o' atweel ;
The grips o' age wi' ither things,
Now gar me think and even feel
That wi' bereavements health gets wings;
And that I'm failing fast I deem.”
“ Well Donald really so you seem.”

“ But wha are ye? if I may ask,
That in my attired mien an' size,
Can through a change enwoven mask
O' ruthless years still recognize
Him, wha was kenn'd ance in a day,
As Donald, sometimes Mr. Gray?”

“ My venerable sire, I ween,
You know me not—I am a friend ;
But like yourself of altered mien ;
Change in my features seems to blend,
With nature, so as to conceal
What words and tokens must reveal.

- “ You had a lovely niece, on whom
 You once bestowed a parent's care,
And gave to her a daughter's room,
 Even willed that she should be your heir,
Thus with a boon yourself supplied,
Which your unwedded state denied.
- “ And father never owned a child
 Than she less prone to disobey ;
Nor one more affable and mild,
 Than what you owned in Helen Gray ;
She, kind and courteous, by all
Was loved alike in cot and hall.
- “ And though of humble birth, her hand
 Became of love the envied prize ;
Even those possessing flocks and land,
 Their passion breathed with smiles and sighs ;
Yet never did a form so fair
Of beauty's power seem less aware.
- “ But Helen's heart in early years,
 Had by a cotter-peasant's son,
One of her youthful school compeers,
 In gleesome innocence been won.
That I am he you now may wot ;
But, O, in mercy chide me not !

- “ Things I've already heard aud seen
That gave to Helen's grave a tongue,
Which have my sad accuser been ;
And from my soul hath accents wrung
Of self-rebuke. Still I am free
From aught that means inconstancy.
- “ But of this theme I must no more !
The heart already pained it stings,
And fills anew to running o'er,
With woe drawn from a thousand springs.
Then Donald Gray, for Helen's sake
Will you from me your ransom take ?
- “ Sir, sport na wi' the woes o' age,
Lest in your mirth ye quaff but shame ;
Nor ween my fondness to engage
By counterfeiting Callum Graham.
Whase presence here might mar your glee,
And teach you deference to me.
- “ Then gae an' at your ain expense
Mak' mirth ; I hae na yet gane gyte,
To be o'ercome wi' vile pretence ;
And weel I ken I bear the wyte
O' taking notes, an' things beside
Distastefu' to parochial pride ”

“ Hear me, O Donald ! ”

“ Sir, I’ve heard
Eneugh to prove what mony ween,
That I am dangerous deemed—‘tis feard
I ablins may unveil the scene
O’ pauper life, an speak aloud
O’ blistering airns an’ fellow’s food.” *

“ Hold Donald ! fly not me, here take
This purse, you know its texture well,
‘Tis Helen’s workmanship—‘twill make
You spurn—not me—this seeming hell,
Where life to indigence allied
Is with fresh miseries supplied.

“ Take it there’s in’t what will restore
Your wonted independence, and
I will yet give you something more ;
But I’ve resolved to leave this land
For ever, and without delay ;
Then take it for I must away.”

“ It is ! it is ! O Callum Graham,
It is the wark o’ Helen’s hands !
But keep it still and let me claim
Your pardon. Oh ! methinks time stands
And backward looks, as if to cast
A tear-fraught smile upon the past.

* Dr. Lyon, Medical Superintendent of Barnhill workhouse, used hot irons for blistering purposes, burning the inmates of all ages on different parts of their bodies, for nearly all complaints. Letter to the Glasgow Sentinel.

“ O, could I but shake aff my years,
And recent injuries forego ;
And pluck frae memory what sears
Enjoyment, life might yet bestow
On me some o' the dregs o' bliss,
And hope now even points to this.

“ Sae, Callum, tak' again your gold ;
I wad anither boon prefer,
And your great kindness makes me bold
To ask it, though perhaps I err,
My life now being in the wane—
Wi' you I'd rather cross the main.

“ I wad the boon I hae received
Wad mair than cancel poortith's ills ;
And frae this den to be relieved,
The very thought o't mair than fills
My heart wi' joy : I e'en, forsooth,
Feel something like returning youth.

“ But my deliverer to tyne—
Though out o' this unlo'esome den
And a' that wealth could gi'e were mine—
Life wad be wearisome ; and then
My heart wad never be at rest,
Sae, Callum, spurn na my request.”

“ Your wish, dear Donald, quite accords
 With my own unexpressed desire ;
And it a gleam of hope affords
 That we may yet, as son and sire,
Away from palaces of foes,
And graves of friends forget our woes.

“ Then get in readiness apace,
 That on our journey we may speed ;
And much I long to quit this place
 Of your captivity : indeed
The very echo of its walls
With tomb-like eeriness appalls.

“ I’m ready quite ; but there is one
 Wha yet maun o’ our party be,
A younger Callum, Helen’s son,
 He hither came alang wi’ me :
May I the boy’s apartment seek,
And bring him forth wi’ you to speak ? ”

“ He’s forth ere now, I’ve with him been ;
 Beside you isolated tree
Upon the wayside, by the green,
 He our return awaits—’twas he
That showed me here—he longs to know
How you have fared, so let us go.”

“ Hech man its like a second birth
In guise o’ liberty to breathe
The air o’ heaven, and tread the yirth
In dignity o’ man ; than ‘neath
That roof, I rather far wad be
In poortith’s lowliest hut and free.

“ Nae yirthly thing like freedom e’er
Can solace the desponding heart,
And life to living things endear,
Even when frae pinching ills apart ;
It is, I trow, a God-gi’en gift,
Bestowed wi’ life frae boon the lift.

“ An’ a’ the ills that I hae borne,
Whilk hae been neither sma’ nor few,
Hae, Callum, o’ their sting been shorn,
This day by providence in you ;
And wi’ your leave I fain wad learn
How ye forgathered wi’ the bairn.”

“ Like the last fragment of a wreck,
Still floating near the fatal spot,
I found him strolling in neglect
Near by my father’s ruined cot ;
And hailed him to enquire for those,
My kin, who now in death repose.

- “ His story I will not rehearse,
For tales of suffering only tend
The fountains of the heart to pierce,
And forth its burning waters send—
Suffice that I’m of all aware,
Even your unfortunate affair.”
- “ Unfortunate aneugh, I trow ;
The staff ye frae the Trossachs brought,
To save was mair than I could do ;
Though it was sauld amaist for nought ;
But since it’s gane we needna make
A present joy past grief partake.
- “ Yet how an’ when he left the House ;
And where he lodged, and how he fared,
If ye sic questions can excuse.
To ken I hae a fond regard ;
For youth’s wha’ve neither guide nor hame,
Aft gang a gate that leads to shame.”
- “ Of him you no such thing need fear—
But yonder, from beside the tree,
He starts apace—he seems to hear
Our voices ; so ‘tis meet that we
The topic change. His virtues will,
I feel assured, commend him still.”

“ Ech me in claes an’ person baith,
He’s sair forjesket an’ forfairn ;
I wat the ruthless hand o’ scaith
Has na been light upon the bairn ;
Fu’ sadly has he proved the dearth
O’ Christian charity on earth.”

“ Ah, Donald, Christians are rare !
Where charity’s the test of faith ;
Of God’s free gifts, the poor man’s share
Is stored away till after death,
With promises most kindly given,
Of justice in the Courts of heaven.

“ To one paternal source of love
Though mankind every blessing owe,
And hope one common home above,
When ends their pilgrimage below ;
Yet pride of rank and love of gain,
Those blessings and that hope profane.

“ A few there be, and yet how few !
Who heed the monitor within,
To God and nature ever true,
Self smooths the rugged paths of sin,
And with apologies and lies
The spirit of the law defies.

“ But when the harbour town we reach,
And have ourselves refreshed, I will
Get suitable attire for each ;
‘Tis mine such duty to fulfil ;
From me parental love is due
To him, and gratitude to you.

* * * * *

“ Now, when upon the ocean's swell,
With yet our native hills in view,
To Scotia bid a fond farewell—
A filial, though a last adieu,
And breathe a tribute to their graves
For whom the past a requiem craves.”

THE FAREWELL.

“ Fare-thee-well my native land !
I, receding from thy shore,
Go towards another strand
To revisit thee no more.

“ Time hath not yet numbered days
Since I hailed thee, fair and bright,
When thou filled my hopeful gaze
With the visions of delight.

“ On thy streamlets and thy dells,
On thy flowerets and thy trees
Nature wove her sweetest spells
Hope's misgivings to appease.

“ But Disappointment came
And a sable scroll unsealed,
Wherein deeds of darkest name
Were unto me revealed.

“ As my own dear Mother land
I do love thee still the best,
But thou with despotic hand
Hast the Clansmen dispossessed.

“ So I'll seek another shore
Where my future home shall be,
And past sorrows triumph o'er
'Mangst the prosperous and free.

“ Yet until life's final close
Thou for me shall hold in trust
A memorial of those
I revere, now in the dust.

“ Those, the noble and the brave,
Ever loyal, ever true,
Who thy prestige oft did save—
Whom at last thy avarice slew.

“ Then for ever fare-thee-well,
 Though I’ve drained the cup of woe
From a mother’s hand so fell,
 Yet I’ll bless thee as I go ;

“ I’ll an intercessor be
 And my orisons will tell
To the Powers above for thee
 Still, forever fare-thee-well.”

END.

AULD SCOTLAND ISNA DEAD.

(On reading in the Scottish American Journal a few weeks ago a Poem by George Bruce St. Andrews, entitled "Auld Scotland's Dead.")

"Auld Mither Scotland dead an' gane!"
Na, Sir! I winna let you say't;
Ye maun be wonderfu' mista'en,
To think her heart has ceased to beat.

On being tauld what ye had said,
To ken if sic mishap could be,
I wrapped my shouthers in my plaid,
An' dauner'd o'er the gate to see.

But she nae symptoms has o' death ;
And though she's been dung owre fu' sair
And fashed at times wi' grippit breath,
She's aye been spinnin' less or mair.

For thongh she's growing somewhat auld,
She hasna tint her ways o' thrift ;
By honest toil through heat an' cauld,
She for hersel' has aye could shift.

And tentie aye o' what she earns,
To keep wi' care or wisely spen',
That she may cleed an' schule her bairns
To fit them for some usefu' en'.

Nae thriftless, randie beggar, she
For sympathy and alms won't whinge,
But work or fecht until she dee,
And never for an awmos cringe.

Sae drap your coronach of woe ;
Lilt up wi' glee some blyther strain
And briskly gar the numbers flow,
For dear auld Scotland isna gane.

And that He lang her life may spare,
Ilk ane should wi' the giftie plead,
For, ane an' a', we'd miss her sair
For usefu' wark an' doughty deed.

When ony black mischief appears,
Menacing Britain's rights or laws
Were Scotland dead, I hae my fears,
Nane e'er like her wad wield the tawse.

For when there's need to skelp a fae,
And bluid maun e'en be freely spilt,
Aye foremost in the deadly fray
Are seen the bonnet and the kilt.

And wheresoe'er abroad ye gang,
Her bairns at honor's post ye'll see,
And hear encored her ilka sang
That breathes o' love or libertie.

Then what could put it in your head
In lamentation loud to rave
About auld Scotland being dead,
And buried in an English grave?

Gae doff again your auld grey plaid,
If it as mourning weeds you wear,
And for your chanter send the maid,
That ye may blaw it loud an' clear.

But cease your coronach of woe,
An' lilt a blyther strain instead,
And gayly let the numbers flow,
For brave auld Scotland isna dead.

GOING IT WHILE YOUNG.

"Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup when it moveth itself aright. At the last it bitteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."—*Prov. XXIII, 31, 32.*

One morning at the break of dawn,
When larks had their first carol sung,
And sparkling dew-drops o'er the lawn
In iris-tinted pendants hung ;
In songful mood I wandered out ;
My muse to love her harp had strung,
When thus went forth a ghastly shout
"Aha ! I'm going it while young."

Amazed I stood and gazed all round,
From sky to earth, from earth to sky,
To learn whence came the fateful sound,
And soon, and sadly did espy
A gallant youth, of goodly mien,
Who erst had been his mother's joy,
Laid helpless on the common green—
A drunk—a half delirious boy.

His prostrate form I raised with care,
While to the sward he fiercely clung,
And with bewildered, vacant stare
Said:—"I am going it while young.
I yet have some wild oats to sow,
The gayeties of life among,
Which must be gathered as they grow,
And I will go it while I'm young."

I chid him kindly, yet severe
Was my rebuke, and seemed to win
From him a penitential tear,
The token of a change within ;
But suddenly he grinned a smile,
While from his mouth a quid he flung,
And with an oath, in adept style,
Exclaimed:—"I'll go it while I'm young."

I saw him in his mad career
His weeping mother rudely spurn ;
To billiards, cards, cigars and beer,
Night after night, saw him return ;
And still he looked the gay young man,
His more degraded chums among ;
Still on the downward pathway ran,
In triumph, going it while young.

Again I sought and counselled him
To quit the lurid haunts of shame ;
When thus he spake—" Life's all a whim,
And older men go it the same ;
What serves the miser's hidden gold ?
The cynic's roundelay unsung ?
Life has no carnival when old ;
Sir, I shall go it while I'm young ! "

But age comes not alone with years ;
The palsied hand the step infirm,
Oft in the prodigal appears,
Ere he has reached life's middle term ;
While youth in midnight orgies spent,
Finds manhood's nobler joys concealed—
Sees the soul's temple-curtain rent—
A yawning sepulchre revealed.

And ere to earth the vernal sun
Had twice his annual visit paid,
This youth, his mad career now run,
Was on a bed of palor laid ;
There tended, prayed for morn and night,
By her whom he in health had spurned ;
His mother's smile the only light
That in darkened soul now burned.

And though consumption's fatal dart
Transpierced his feeble, wasting form,
The adage nestled in each heart
A shattered bark may ride the storm—
A few months more and tokens rife
Were in his livid features shown,
That 'mongst the gayeties of life,
He dissolution's seeds had sown.

Again his prostrate form I raised,
And sought to comfort him and cheer ;
But now he wept and fondly gazed,
And said—" Thus ends youth's mad career ;
The crown of folly cramps my brow,
Death o'er me has his lasso flung,
The grave is looming in my view,
And I must go it while I'm young."

THE DYING REQUEST
AND LAST WORDS OF AN OLD SETTLER.

“ O, transmit to my friends my last wish here on earth,”
The dying, old settler said,
“ Bid them give me a grave in the land of my birth,
Beside where my parents are laid.
Had I the fleet pinions of light I would fly
To my native old cot in the glen,
And there on the couch of my boyhood would die,
And go to my rest where my ancestors lie,
And be with my kindred again.

“ By ambition impelled, from that glen and that cot
In the hey day of youth I did roam,
In quest of a joy that is ever remote,
And never more near than at home.
Though wealth and position young fancy may lure,
And hope point abroad to the prize,
Yet the novice in life his fond dreams to secure,
In exile privation and toil must endure,
And at last but chagrin realize.

“ There is treasure, indeed, but in exile not found ;
‘Tis by sympathy coined in the heart,
And where the endearments of kindred abound
Doth bliss to its owners impart.
Where kindling affection its tendrils first twined,
Where love a response first obtained,
A place upon earth so endeared to the mind—
In memory so hallowed—one never can find,
Though ambition’s last height should be gained.

Now hope with its triumphs illusive and vain,
Having ceased to have power to enslave,
In my audit of life the whole balance of gain
Is a drearier path to the grave.
But if I in death still an exile must be
And my memory a blank amongst men,
Though sad yet resigned, I’ll accept the decree
As an outcome of life ; but my spirit when free
Shall revisit the cot in the glen.

TO A GOWAN.

On seeing one of sickly growth in a Canadian garden.

Hail to thee "Crimson tipped flower,"
Ah! traiket like thou seem'st to cower,
And yet in thy exotic glower
 A runic lore
Gives to fond memory a power
 Unfelt before.

Sweet darling of the Poet's muse,
Whom nature's every lover lo'es,
Frae bathing in thy native dew
 What brought thee here?
To dwine a sickly, lone recluse
 Throughout the year.

On thy frail youth, wi' sky o'er cast—
A bleak death-boding pent-up blast
Brewed in the biting, could nor' wast—

Did nature frown?
Or had some laird an edict passed
To plough thee down?

Alas! how mony I could trace,
Sweet flowerets of the human race,
Endeared by beauty's every grace,
Hae dwined like thee;
Thus exiled frae their native place,
Across the sea.

But why need I thus question thee?
Queen floweret of the Scottish lea,
Ablins like mony mair, and me,
Frae thy far hame,
A richer, statelier flower to be
Thou hither came.

Or, haply, that thou might enjoy
A warmer sun and clearer sky,
And in the Zephyrs passing by,
A gentler breeze;
Though these without some natal tie
Soon fail to please.

Or maybe by some fond exile,
His heart's sad yearnings to beguile,
Brought hither frae his native isle,
In hope that he
When greeted wi' thy kindred smile
Might blyther be.

But whatsoe'er the weird might be
That wysed thee here sic ills to dree,
Thou now art doomed, I weel can see,
Ere vera auld,
In summer's heat to dwine, and dee
In winter's cauld.

Nae mair, at morn when bees resume
Their luscious toil on bud and bloom,
And heather-bells the air perfume
Frae distant heath,
Wilt thou the yellow tassled broom
Awake beneath.

Rich vines may shade thee, or may fan
Thy drooping form, sae sickly, wan,
While cherished by the hand of man,
Wi' tenderest care
But, Oh ! restore thee naething can,
Save native air.

Sweet emblem of departed bliss,
On thee I'll print a parting kiss ;
Still there's anither place than this,
 Where, ablins, we
Again may meet, and never miss
 Things 'yont the sea.

A place where ilk sweet thing retires—
Where joy anew its spirit fires—
And's ne'er misled by vain desires
 For higher bliss :
A place where beauty ne'er expires—
 Now take my kiss.

MY AULD SCOTCH PLAID.

I wadna gi'e my auld Scotch plaid
 For a' the dainty haps I see ;
Though twa score years since it was made
 It's aye the same as new to me.
I wat it lacks the gaudy charm
 That skinkles in a foppish e'e,
But, O, it keeps me tight an' warm,
 And while I live my hap 'twill be.

It's been a comforter for lang,
To my auld wife as weel's to me,
It deftly on her shouthers hang,
And wrapped the bairns when they were wee ;
Now they are a' to manhood grown,
And buirdly chiels as ye may see ;
O, may they aye through life be known
A credit to the plaid and me.

There's something in the Scottish plaid
Mair than to fend frae weet and cauld ;
Bright memories that ne'er shall fade,
It still endears to young an' auld ;
Of worship-consecrated dells—
Of bluidy heath and martyr's urns—
In mystic eloquence it tells,
And of a Wallace and a Burns.

Auld Scotia to her clansmen said,
When first their ranks she did review,
“ Let hearts that beat beneath the plaid
Be ever generous and true—
Your backs ne'er turn on friend or foe—
The peaceful stranger shield and aid—
Let despot, knave and traitor know
The law that gleams beneath the plaid.”

And wad ilk nation don the plaid,
And wear it as it should be worn,
Usurpers wad be feckless made,
Bairns a' be independent born ;
And clansmen brave, the warld o'er,
Ilk servile impulse trample doon,
And homage cease frae shore to shore,
Save to the Chief wha rules aboon.

O, there's a treasure in the plaid,
A tome of classic hero lore ;
And 'twas, ere court costumes were made,
The royal garb young Freedom wore ;
And though it lacks the gaudy charm
That skinkles in a foppish e'e,
It keeps me tidy tight an' warm,
And while I live my hap 'twill be.

DISCONSOLATE JEANIE.

Vestreen when the scenes of the evening were closing,
And echo had chimed the last hymn of the grove,
While nature in beauty was calmly reposing,
Alone by the Clutha I musing did rove.
The dew from each blossom rich odours distilling,
Perfumed every breeze as it passed o'er the vale,
The zephyr's soft voice through the woods sweetly thrilling
Did fall on my ear like some fairy love tale.

'Mongst sylvan recesses delighted I wandered,
Where kenmuire on Clutha looks down with a smile,
And there, on the scene as I listlessly pondered,
I spied lovely Jeanie the pride of Carmyle.
An angel she seemed, by the riverside straying,
As slowly she wended the wild flowers among,
Her loose raven locks o'er her lilly breast playing
While Clutha's faint murmurs were lost in her song.

Though sweetly her voice rose aloft on the Zephyr,
A heart thrilling sadness was breathed in her strain ;
A tear on the brink of her blue eyes did quiver,
Her fair bosom heaved as if bursting in twain.
In silence I gazed, till with pensive emotion
I heard her sad accents a secret unfold ;
She had loved, but deceit was returned for devotion,
She sighs now for one who is faithless and cold.

“O, Jamie !” she said, and she gazed on the river,
“Oft, oft have ye vowed by the powers in the sky,
That your love was sincere, would be true to me ever,
Till Kenmuir should weep o’er the Clutha run dry ;
But Kenmuir still smiles—of your falsehood a token—
And Clutha’s clear water still flows to the sea ;
While faithless your vows, like my fond heart are broken,
Now nothing but death can bring solace to me.”

“Dear Jeanie” I cried, while impended her ruin,
“O, seek not in death thy sad loss to repair ;
Why deem that one’s falsehood must be thy undoing ?
Why thus shroud thy soul in the gloom of despair ?
Though plighted thy fond heart has been to another,
By him though forsaken, that heart do not break ;
And if it one pang in thy bosom would smother
Ere night come again thee my bride I will make.”

In amazement she fled from the brink of the river ;
 I sought, but in her lone path to pursue ;
 She was gone, and I feared that it might be forever—
 A prayer I breathed and in sadness withdrew.
 But morning's sweet dawn in fresh beauty returning,
 Caused Kenmuir again on the Clutha to smile
 And lonely, and dowie, and comfort still spurning,
 I saw her—the love blighted flower of Carmyle. *

* Clutha—the ancient name for the river Clyde in Scotland—Kenmuir—a beautiful romantic landscape where the Clyde flows through a deep ravine, which, during the summer months, teems with floral beauty, and resounds with the sweet melody of birds—Carmyle—a hamlet on the margin of the river, about a mile and a half below Kenmuir.

ASPECTS OF MATRIMONY.

O, how happy is the chiel,
 By his ain fireside,
 Wha has rowth o' milk an' meal
 By his ain fireside ;
 Wi' an ingle burning clear,
 And a wifie he lo'es dear,
 Wha aye smiles when he is near.
 By his ain fireside.

Life to him can ne'er seem lang,
By his ain fireside,
Such domestic sweets amang,
By his ain fireside ;
And mair than a king is he,
While his subjects a' are free,
Living in sweet harmonie,
By his ain fireside.

He sees a' things aye gang weel,
By his ain fireside,
And he seeks nae ither biel
Than his ain fireside ;
There his toils are a' repaid,
While he kindly gives his aid,
For he's loved, and he's obeyed,
By his ain fireside.

And when death does on him ca',
By his ain fireside,
With a summons to withdraw
Frae his ain fireside ;
He is soothed in his distress,
And feels nature's pangs grow less
In his family's fond caress,
By his ain fireside.

But oh, woes me for the chiel,
By his ain fireside,
Wha would fain hae a' things leal,
By his ain fireside ;
Yet frae e'en till dawn o' morn,
Still must quaff the cup of scorn,
And endure a bosom thorn,
By his ain fireside.

O, a dowie wight is he,
By his ain fireside,
For he hears nae family glee,
By his ain fireside ;
On his features, drooping sair,
Is the weary path of care,
And joy never ventures there,
By his ain fireside.

Wi' his cauldride, sullen mate,
By his ain fireside,
He sits owrie, dull and blate,
By his ain fireside ;
Till his bairnies, ane an' a',
Wha ne'er kind example saw,
Gie him cause whiles to withdraw
Frae his ain fireside.

To some evening howff he gangs,
Frae his ain fireside,
Where to triumph o'er the wrangs
O' his ain fireside ;
He the maddening dregs doth sup
Of intoxication's cup,
Till death winds the sorrows up
Of his ain fireside.

LILLIAN GRAY.

Cold is the wintry blast,
Snow flakes are falling fast ;
Weary and hungry, hatless and shoeless,
Lillian the orphan maid,
Begging the stranger's aid,
Longs for a home that is hopeless and viewless.

Alas ! is there no one—
For Lillian is human—
Who will deign to but give her the look of a friend ?
A kind look might strengthen,
Encourage and lengthen
Her efforts to be what the virtuous commend.

Still, still she keeps pacing
The sidewalk, and facing
Her sisters in furs, with a tearful appeal ;
And still they keep passing,
While snowflake amassing,
All coldly, yet kindly her rags would conceal.

Lillian, poor Lillian !
One of the million
Whom want of employment to misery has hurl'd,
She, whom God made beautiful—
Once holy and dutiful—
Is fallen and crushed 'neath the hoof of the world.

Spurned by the "Unco Good,"
Denied leave to toil for food,
Driven from shelter no more to get in ;
Barred from prosperity,
Too wretched for charity,
What can she do for a living but sin ?

Ah ! still it snowing,
While coming and going
Homeward from meeting, where many did pray,
Are crowds of repenters,
Churchmen and dissenters,
But none show compassion for poor Lillian Gray.

Alas ! for the blindness
Of Christian kindness !
The Christ not perceiving in lowly array,
Thus heaven would purchase
With gorgeous churches,
And leave God-built structures to ruin a prey.

Now weird is the glimmer
Of street-lights grown dimmer,
The comers and goers have passed and are gone ;
At crossing or corner
No proud eye to scorn her,
Poor Lillian is left in her misery alone.

Outworn and dejected—
Shunned—spurned—unprotected—
She stands on the bridge as if counting each wave.
Oh ! merciful Heaven !
With death she has striven,
And found in the river a home and a grave.

THE SCENES OF GYLE;

OR,

A HOLIDAY EXCURSION.

The rising sun, with brightening ray,
Had newly ushered in the day ;
And warblers gay, in verdant bowers,
In concert joined their minstrel powers,
When forth the fair Eliza hied,
Bound for the Highlands down the Clyde.

The Zephyrs gently moved the stream
To ripple in the sun's bright beam ;
The sea-birds soared in wild parade,
To hail the lovely Lowland maid ;
The boat impatient seemed the while,
To bear her to the scenes of Gyle.

Her russet dress, though plain yet neat,
Her winsome form, her artless gait,
With nameless raptures fired my soul,
And fairly did my heart enthrall,
I leapt into the boat the while,
And sought with her the scenes of Gyle.

Now seated by the fair one's side,
O'er the waves we swiftly glide,
Which, dancing in the radiant beam,
Of their charge rejoicing seem.
Her looks akin to love the while,
Bid hope within my bosom smile.

Lone Arranteenie's lofty braes,
Endeared by Tannihill's sweet lays,
In vain did glisten to outvie
The sparkles of Eliza's eye ;
A seraph's grace was in her smile,
As on we glided up Lochgyle.

And as her lilly hand I prest,
I marked a motion in her breast,
That like a streamlet in a dell,
In secret flowed, yet seem to tell,
That one in love our hearts were while
We landed on the shore of Gyle.

Then arm in arm we sought the glen,
Where Ulva's chief heard Ullin's men
Pursue him for his bonie bride,
Till launched upon the fatal tide.
I, too, would dared the yawning lake,
And died for fair Eliza's sake.

But through the far embowering glade
With kindling hearts in peace we strayed,
And gayly talked, and wild flowers pu'd,
And deeply loved and fondly wooed,
Till every look and every smile
Endeared for aye the scenes of Gyle.

THE EDEN OF LIFE.

'Tis a joy when the face of early morn
With ethereal smiles is beaming,
And the fragrant breath of the flowering thorn
Through the air in currents is streaming,
To wander forth on the dewy plains,
Or the banks of the winding river,
And list to the manifold lyric strains
Of the Poet that singeth ever.

There all things are busy in God's employ,
Dutiful, dilligent, each apart ;
Whilst latent springs of a sacred joy
Are welling up in each grateful heart.
They are not plodding with sordid aim
For ought that tends to corrupt the soul ;
Theirs is not a life of guilt and shame—
They covet no wealth but nature's dole.

On this Republic of earth and sky,
With beauty and melody all aglow,
No creatures are worshipped in places high,
No tribe dooms the others to endless woe.
Each chorister warbles its matin song,
Each flower on the altar its incense lays,
And nothing is whispered of right or wrong,
All hearts are devoted to love and praise.

The Zephyrs, anon, ever playful and free,
Coming and going as if by stealth,
Imparting a freshness to flower and tree,
Salute as they pass, with a kiss of health.
Thus away from the turmoil of human strife
Where worship and war alternate reign,
There is in this world an Eden of life,
Where freedom and innocence still remain.

O, give me a home in some rural spot,
Away from the haunts of greed and sin,
Where palaces, hovels and slums are not,
Where class and sham have not entered in,
There, in the halo of nature's smiles,
Joyous and free I should walk abroad,
Save from the many alluring wiles,
In manhood's pride and a child of God.

ADDRESS TO FRIENDSHIP.

Hail holy alliance of hearts !
Sweet reflex of something divine--
If aught a real blessing imparts,
The glory, O Friendship, is thine.

Unfettered by custom or creed,
Unbounded by climate or zone,
In nature, by Heaven decreed,
The spirit of goodness alone

Like a wandering angel, unseen,
Through life's boundless reign thou dost wend,
Dispensing, where sorrow has been,
New bliss in the smiles of a friend.

It is thine the despairing to soothe,
The homeless to shelter and feed,
The naked to warm and to clothe,
The wayward to counsel and lead.

It is thine on leal memories to trace
Endearments that cease not to be,
Nor distance nor time can efface
One record inscribed there by thee.

For soul when attracted by soul,
And wedded by thee whilst a-near,
Though oceans between them should roll,
They still to each other are dear.

By a name or the bounds of a hearth,
In each heart though encircled thou be,
Yet where is the bosom on earth
That beats not devotion to thee?

No servile sustainer of wealth—
The humble to thee are most dear,
To whom, or in sickness or health,
Bliss flows from thy smile or thy tear.

Have I not thine influence known ?
By thee have I never been blest ?
When by sickness or care overthrown,
Did'st thou never lull me to rest ?

Ah, yes ! like an angel of light,
Relieving my heart of its throes,
Thou hast put my dark bodings to flight,
And soothed me to blissful repose.

As the moon woos the desolate sky
Till the earth drink the beams of her love,
So to man, when dark ruin is nigh,
Thou, Friendship, a saviour dost prove.

And would he the cerements but rend
Which thy omnipresence conceal,
Every soul thou in union wouldst blend,
And Heaven in nature reveal.

The wailings of misery would cease ;
Extortion and pride become dumb ;
And war yield dominion to peace ;
And bondage to freedom succumb.

And the ties that endearingly bind
The fond hearts of parent and child,
Be cherished by all humankind,
Inhabiting City or wild.

For though neither temple nor shrine
Re-echoes an anthem to thee ;
Yet in man thou art something divine—
O Friendship ! thou art heaven to me.

THE LOVERS' MEETING.

“ The sun is sinking in the west,
The flowers begin to close,
Each warbler sings with joyful breast,
To charm his mate's repose.
The Zephyrs frae their dewy wings
Sweet scented odours pour,
And nature all a tribute brings
To bless the gloamin hour.

“ And why should we, dear Jeanie, still
In singleness repine,
Whilst we of bliss might drink our fill
At Hymen's love-lit shrine?
Why should the tenants of the grove
Live happier than we?
O, gie consent, dear Jeanie, love,
Come down the burn wi' me.”

“ O, Tamie dinna press sae,
Ye'll tempt me to do wrang ;
For while I canna say you nae
Ye ken I daurna gang.
My mither is a cankrie dame,
Nae liberty she'll gie ;
I might gae seek anither hame
If down the burn wi' thee.

“ And now the kye are through the glen,
Fast wearing in her view ;
I wadna for the yirth she'd ken
That I hae been wi' you.
O, dinna think I slight ye, Tam,
Ye're every thing to me ;
But dinna seek me down the burn—
Consent I canna gie.”

“ Dear Jeanie, let the kye gang hame—
Your cankrie mither flyte—
If ye're the slave o' ony dame,
Your ain is a' the wyte.
See there's my hand, come down the burn,
Take fate alang wi' me ;
I pledge my heart, ere we return,
This night I'll make you free.

“ I’ve lo’ed you, Jeanie, lang an’ dear,
Wi’ love that canna tyne ;
Gin ye lo’e me I winna spier,
I ken your heart is mine.
Sae let us down the burn bedeen,
And in the Lover’s Cove,
Embowered amang the bushes green
That skirt the Cushat grove.

Our plighted vows there’s nane shall hear,
Except the Powers above,
And what on earth can life endear
Like heaven-recorded love?
Ye’ll get a hame, ane o’ your ain,
Wherein ye’ll aye be free.”
“ Weel, Tamie, take me down the burn,
And I’ll take fate wi’ thee.”

OUR AIN FOLK.

Addressed by a young Snob to an audience of schoolmates at a Holiday Social.

No connoisseur am I to show
How Scientists explain folk,
I rise to vindicate, and throw
A halo round “ Our ain Folk.”

All races of mankind on earth,
Both savage and humane folk,
From instinct, or from pride of birth,
Have named their tribe "Our ain Folk."

There's but one origin, some say,
For sage and for insane folk,
But nature inly whispers aye
There's no folk like "Our ain Folk."

Hence we, the rising "Upper Ten,"
The learned—the urbane folk,
Bright progeny of noble men,
Assert ourselves "Our ain Folk."

We are but human, it is true,
And suckers from the main stock,
But others paddle our canoe,
Which dignifies "Our ain Folk."

Begotten with a pedigree,
None of your self-made plain folk,
A star in constant apogee
Is our aspiring "Ain Folk."

Down in the lower spheres of life,
There may be bigger brain folk
Born Artist and born Poet rife,
But still we are the main Folk.

Because we neither spin nor toil,
Fools designate us vain folk,
But to be spent on loom or soil
God never meant "Our ain Folk."
And loyal aye to church and crown,
When menaced by profane folk,
On high names have been written down,
Beneath those names "Our ain Folk."
Utopians may task their skill
In commune ways to train folk,
But soon the world would stand still,
If severed from "Our ain Folk."
And whatso'er they may disclose
To please or yet to pain folk,
Nor man, nor friend shall e'er foreclose
God's contract with "Our ain Folk."
And men who boldly search and think
For facts to entertain folk,
May find the royal missing link
Reflected in "Our ain Folk."
Unlike the common imps of sin,
The horny-fisted plain folk;
God's ornamental work is in
Our privileged, honored "Ain Folk." *

* The last sentence brought down the house, and the speaker was carried shoulder high into the Bar-room.