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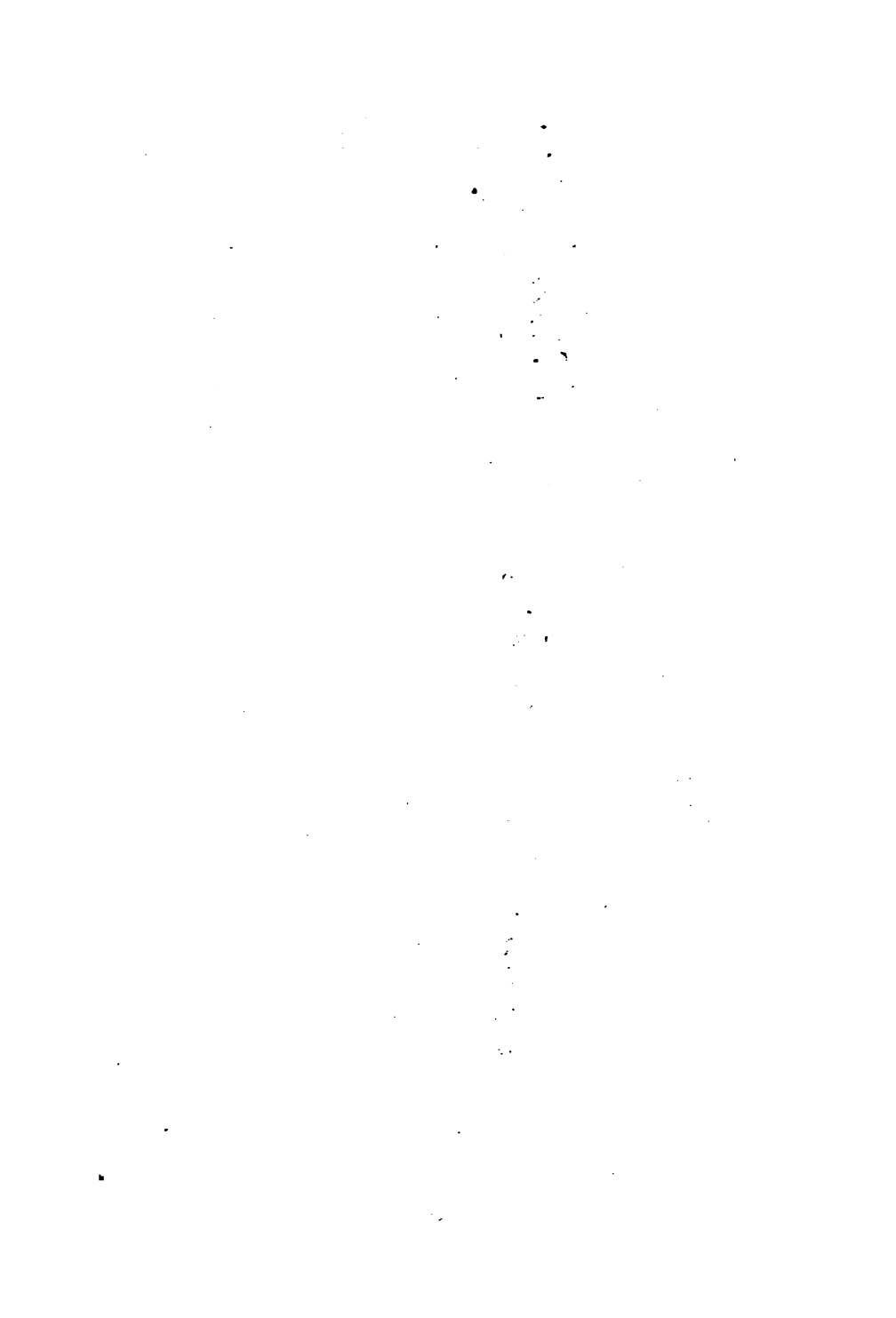
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HOMELY MUSINGS.



7194Y





HOMELY MUSINGS,

BY A

RUSTIC MAIDEN.



KILMARNOCK :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

MDCCLXX.

280. j. 221.

E R R A T A .



- Page 14, 10th line, for "When" read "Then."
,, 14, 18th line, for "gash" read "rash."
,, 20, 18th line, for "walk" read "to feel."
,, 26, 2nd line, for "woman" read "women."
,, 37, 2nd line, for "sound" read "resound."
,, 37, 7th line, before the word "her" insert "now."
,, 38, 10th line, for "sits" read "sit."
,, 41, 22nd line, omit the word "who."
,, 46, 21st line, instead of "stop'd" read "stooped."
,, 51, 6th line, instead of "Persian" read "Assyrian."
,, 58, 2nd line, instead of "Francis" read "Frances."
,, 59, 19th line, instead of "braey" read "bare."
,, 61, 19th line, instead of "back" read "bask."

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P R E F A C E .

HAVING, in the years that are past, composed and written various pieces—I know not what kind of writing to call it, as I suppose it is not prose, and I am not such a judge of poetry as to know whether it may be called poetry or not, or some kind of a mixture of both ; but let the writing be what sort it will, good or bad, readable or not—I, having written these pieces, and cast them into the hands of several persons to do with them whatever they pleased, and not knowing what may have become of them—whether they may have exposed them to the scrutiny of others, or whether they have destroyed them privately, or have them still in their possession—I have, therefore, thought proper to make a confession and explanation of what pieces I did write, and what prompted me to write them, and how I disposed of some of them after being written.

From my earliest years I was exceedingly fond of reading ; and to my youthful imagination the beauties of poetry appeared particularly charming: and I soon got a number of the old popular songs by heart, chanting them to some tune of my own. When but a little girl I had to go out to the fields sometimes to herd the cows, and having to pass a good deal of time all alone I had room to muse, and find amusement the best way I could.

One day as I sat in the fields watching the cows, I began to think of Burns's song of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," and then I began to look at, and to think of our own bonnie banks and braes of Garnock ; and at last I fell in imitation of Burns to compose a few simple verses, which I put into writing afterwards. This was the first attempt that I made at composing and writing poetry. I believe when I came home I mentioned to my sisters how I had been making a song of my own ; repeating it to them, at which they only laughed. My sisters were left the house before I wrote anything else, and when I wrote afterwards I never let my folk know what I was writing.



HOMELY MUSINGS.

WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF MY FATHER & THE
PROSPECT OF THEN LEAVING MY BIRTHPLACE.

My father, now laid low by death,
Nothing on earth can now molest ;
Life's billowy cares which once oppress'd
And pain'd that heart, are hush'd to rest.

No more I hear the affectionate voice,
Nor meet the fond approving smile,
That every pleasure could enhance,
And lightly sweeten every toil.

He sees not how unfeeling hearts
May vex the fatherless forlorn ;
And when with bleeding heart I weep,
May treat my tears with cruel scorn.

Is there no anguish of the mind
To which we solace should impart ?
Should we to bodies weak be kind,
Yet pity not an aching heart ?

They little know how sad this heart
May be from my birthplace to part—
To tear from home and every friend,
Must every tender feeling rend.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Farewell to all those buoyant hopes
 That fill a bosom young and gay,
 That brightens up our future lot,
 If from thee, Wood, I must away.

From hours in idle pleasure spent,
 I grieve not thus to part—
 No scenes of giddy merriment,
 Wake sorrow in my heart.

'Tis every dear and tender tie
 That binds this heart to earth,
 Is twin'd around my native home,
 The spot that gave me birth.

There first I breath'd the sweet spring morn's
 Invigorating breeze,
 That thrills fresh health through every vein,
 Makes each sensation please.

There all my childhood's days were spent,
 When hope doth brightly gleam,
 Casting its dazzling, witching light
 O'er many a waking dream.

From life's unceasing round of toils
 In books was found a sweet respite—
 Flowers, trees, and murmuring waters
 All kindled new delight.

And sweetest draughts from pleasure's cup
 Were drawn from history's page,
 That tells of wise philosophers,
 Kings, poets, and the sage.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

It tells how patriot warriors rose,
 Their country to defend,
 Who made the freedom of their land
 Their chiefest earthly end.

It tells how for the name of Christ
 The faithful martyrs bled ;
 How noble Christian champions
 The truth in triumph led.

It tells how on the mountain side
 They rais'd their song on high—
 Their seats were on the grassy turf,
 Their church roof was the sky.

There first we read that heavenly Word,
 Each truthful, precious page,
 That lighted has this lower world
 From time's remotest age.

Can I forget thee, sweet Wood home,
 When summer fields luxuriant blow,
 Or in winter, when the chilling storm
 Spreads o'er thy fields her sheets of snow ?

Can I forget sweet Garnock banks,
 Its waters gentle murmuring flow,
 Or stately beech, whose spreading branch
 Shades o'er its bosom pure below ?

Can I forget the warbler's song
 That welcom'd in the joyous spring,
 The bright and sunny summer days,
 When all the groves with music ring ?

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Can I forget the cheerful strains
 Of the lark when soaring to the sky ; -
 Glad notes from thrush and blackbird's throat,
 Or lapwing's wild and plaintive cry ?

Can I forget whate'er my lot ?
 Can home by me be e'er forgot ?
 Can I forget where'er I go,
 Where first I tasted bliss or woe ?

Can I forget the years fled bye ?
 Like yesterday they seem ;
 They rise up in my memory
 Like fancy's midnight dream.

Six brothers round my father's hearth
 Sat in their youth and prime,
 But now that hearth is sadly stript
 By ruthless hand of time.

Four sisters 'neath my father's roof
 I saw in childhood's days,
 But ere I reached womanhood,
 They wed were all away.

And now they're gone to other homes,
 To nearer partners bound ;
 With prattling children round their hearth,
 Their various homes resound.

 GARNOCK WATER.

By thy side, lovely Garnock,
 Delighted I'll stay,

HOMELY MUSINGS

For thy voice like a charmer
Wiles sadness away.

I'll muse on what cometh,
As time rolls along ;
That none can evade,
Whether witty or strong.

Other maids may arise,
Whose steps here may stray,
By thy side, lovely Garnock,
When I am away.

Each year brings its changes ;
Nature's spring and decay ;
But thou art like time,
Still pursuing thy way.

Thou indeed hast thy summer,
When thy waters are low ;
And in winter thy floods
Are with ice bound below.

We glide down life's stream
Like a bark on thy wave,
To eternity's ocean,
'Yond death and the grave.

By thy side, lovely Garnock,
Enraptured I'll stay,
For thy voice like a charmer
Wiles sadness away.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

THE WOOD'S SWEET SOLITUDE.

I LOVE the Wood's sweet solitude,
 Where nought is seen on summer day,
 But verdure green and flowers gay ;
 Where nought is heard but vocal thrush,
 And gladsome notes from tree and bush ;
 Where nought we touch, that will annoy ;
 No serpents lurk there, to destroy ;
 Where all we taste is pure and fresh—
 Tis health's sweet cup with hunger's zest ;
 Where winds that blow are such as bring
 All rich perfume upon their wing.
 The sun shines there with brilliant ray,
 Diffusing warmth on summer day—
 There peace doth reign, nor strife intrude ;
 I love the Wood's sweet solitude.

A HARVEST DAY'S STROLL.

From the Wood and Woodburn,
 On a fine harvest day ;
 On a visit to Smithstone
 We marched away—
 Idly seeking our pleasure ;
 Whilst busy from morn,
 Many hands were engag'd
 In reaping the corn.
 But our fate's so uncertain,
 And time brings such change—
 Ah ! we know not if ever
 Thus again we shall range.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

How grand was the prospect ;
 Many fields we surveyed,
 In the fair garb of autumn,
 All richly arrayed.

Between Lady Isla
 Stretch'd out on the sea,
 And Goatfell's blue summit,
 Some ships we did see.

'Mongst the sloughs of Mossmulloch
 We wandered that day,
 Where the beautiful heather
 Bloom'd around all our way.

And we passed a dwelling
 On yon rocky brae,
 Where a pretty maid lives
 Many hearts stole away.

Our companion has gone
 To his home, far away ;
 And those hours are now fled,
 As sweet flowers decay.

And our fate's so uncertain,
 And time brings such change—
 Ah ! we know not if ever
 Thus again we shall range.

IS A WOMAN'S WORTH TO BE KNOWN BY THE
 NUMBER OF SWEETHEARTS SHE HAS ?

I know thou laugh'st because I am alone ;
 No sweetheart knocking at the door—

HOMELY MUSINGS.

With breathless anxiousness inquires if I am in ;
 Who'd gladly share my sorrows and my joys,
 If haply he my heart might win.
 But tell me if a woman's merit you may know
 By pompous retinue of lovers at her heels,
 Importuning one word to show
 Her heart is not entirely made of steel—
 Or suitors humbly bending low
 Their fervency of passion to reveal.
 When I must reckon'd be, amongst that worthless
 class
 Of girls who can't command the attention or
 esteem
 Of any individual of that varied mass
 Of sprightly gallant/sailing pleasure's stream,
 Who like the prancing courser in the battle dash,
 Impetuous into every dissipating scene
 Which, with a conscience delicate, might clash,
 When moments of reflection intervene,
 Upbraiding them with foolishness and rash—
 Indulgence in an empty dream,
 Which, like the blazing meteor, soon must pass
 Into the darker shades of sober e'en.

MARY M'ALISTER TO DUNCAN CAMPBELL,

OR, HIGHLAND LASS TO HIGHLAND LAD.

DUNCAN, ye'll think me maist ill-bred,
 Ta ca' you, like auld John Mac., dead,
 That tied his hat upon his head—
 A trogen bowman was his trade :

HOMELY MUSINGS.

A targe woman for his wife,
 Whose element domestic strife ;
 Her house was with disturbance rife—
 John got a poor henpecked life.

Her hussy daughters, like hersel',
 If men would marry, 't would be well
 If first they'd think if they'd agree
 The wife should maister owre them be.

A tyrant woman without control
 Would wrest all pleasure from man's soul,
 Leave him a load of care and toil,
 And all his household comfort spoil.

Having a husband now in view,
 I've thought to set my cap for you ;
 How do you think a match would do ?
 Would any one have cause to rue ?

Thou know'st, indeed, I am no squall
 Would fill thy house with endless brawl,
 From which escape thou could'st not make,
 By night asleep, or day awake.

Perhaps thou'lt think that one so bold
 Could hardly miss of being a scold ;
 The truth is men are bashful grown—
 Women must court or live alone.

A CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THE BURNING OF THE
 WOOD BYRE AND BOILERHOUSE IN APRIL 1855

My shoes I had just taken off,
 My stockings were not yet untied ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Something I said, I cannot what,
 Whilst Mary herself to her breakfast applied.
 I turned toward the window as I spoke,
 I was amazed to see it black as midnight with the
 gathering smoke—
 What awful reek is that ? I instantaneously cried !
 As with suspicious glance, the sudden gleam I ey'd.
 A spark may have fallen from the train,
 My mother began to say ;
 As from our little room she turn'd,
 Herself to come away ;
 But I thought upon our old thatch'd house,
 And to the door I ran —
 “The house ! the house ! it is on fire,”
 I cried in loud alarm ;
 For the smoke was issuing through the thatch,
 Though there I saw no flame ;
 So I rushed through the boilerhouse
 To see from whence it came.
 I cast my eyes on the other side,
 And beneath the chimney there,
 The fire did blaze, and I shrieked out
 Like one in wild despair
 To my brother, and Henry Findlay, who
 Were fortunately near ;
 They cast their implements aside,
 And both of them they ran,
 To climb on the roof, and put it out
 If possibly they can.
 That moment as I turn'd about

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Mary came out the door ;
 "The cows, we must quickly get them out,"
 I cried and said no more.
 She hasted her back by the byrehead door,
 And toward the foot one I ran ;
 As I ran to the door, in the field I espied,
 At his work our servant man .
 "Duncan ! Duncan ! the house is on fire !"
 I loudly bawled out ;
 He left his horses in the field
 At this alarming shout.
 I darted then into the byre,
 We loos'd the iron bands—
 From the fire was seen, but few minutes elapsed,
 Till released they were every one,
 From the danger of meeting a fearful death,
 That seemed so near at hand.
 We pushed them all out of the door ;
 They were left to march alone,
 To find their field by the public road
 On that eventful morn.
 My mother stood still in the byrehead
 Like one quite stupified,
 That knows not what to think or do,
 So stunn'd and terrified.
 "Come out ! come out ! why do you stand there ?
Come out & escape the fire.
 The fire will soon be above your head,"
 (It was spreading fast and wide.)
 We left not the door till she had gone out,
 Then we hastened toward the wall

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Where the men had gone up to put out the fire ;
Water, water, they urgently call.

My heart it grew heavy and sore when I saw
How the fire rushed furiously on ;

Oh ! they are not fit to put it out,
Oh ! oh ! I did actually groan.

To serve them with water in pails, and in stoups,
We quickly exerted our limbs ;

And the neighbours came running so quickly about
As if they had flown upon wings.

And their zeal to assist in that hour of need,
By their efforts was speedily shown ;

For they ceas'd not to water the burning house,
Till the fire was quenched and gone.

Its progress was stopp'd as it enter'd that spot
Where the place of my birth it had been ;

And the years that are past, like that fiery blast,
Have glided away like a dream.

Surely Providence was kind, whose all knowing
mind,

This accident must have foreseen—

His waters He sent the fire to prevent ;
No further it went, than for some wise intent,
Ordained had been.

Had no water been near, as at that time of year,

The case it had usually been—
All the people that flock'd, the fire would have mock'd,
And left us one ruinous scene.

But a few days before the rains down did pour ;
Our great barrel was fill'd to the brim,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

And the old pump-well had its waters upswell'd,
 As if it were a good store laid in.
 Providential it was, whatever the cause,
 That it happen'd by day and not night ;
 That the winds they were low, no high gales did
 blow
 But the breeze it breath'd gentle and light—
 And it blew not the way where the straw and the
 hay,
 A dread conflagration would light.
 Many false tales were told, but I can be bold
 To say 'tis the truth I declare—
 Question who you may, whatever they say,
 The truth is the same everywhere.
 My good neighbours all, should these lines chance
 to fall
 At anytime 'neath your eyes reach,
 My thanks are sincere, I wish you good cheer,
 A happy career, and a character none may
 impeach.

 THE WORLD'S UNCERTAINTY

A world of uncertainty is this,
 No certain good, no certain happiness ;
 Those blessings and those comforts that our life
 surround
 May leave us naked ere another day comes round.
 With pleasure do we gaze upon our dearest friend,
 To-morrow and that pleasure may be at an end—
 He to some distant, foreign country may have gone,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Or to that farthest country, from which returneth
none.

Does man or woman their heart on some loving fond
one place ?

Some sudden cruel blow may that tie of love
efface,

Leaving all a ghastly solitude around—

Amongst earth's numerous herbs, no balm
To cure the wounded heart is found.

Do parents fancy through the mist of future years
They see their children rise,

All good, and brave, and virtuous, and wise ?
Disease or accident may snatch them all away,

Dashing headlong their highbuilt hopes
Beside them in the clay.

And children nurs'd up tenderly
Beneath their parents' love and care ;

That hope those parents will instruct
Them till they are grown old ;

May left be orphans desolate
To ~~wait~~ ^{find} the world without a friend.

How cheerless, lone, and cold,
Is man or woman's heart

Firm wedded to the world ?
Wealth may take wings and fly from them,

Or they from it be hurl'd ;
Though their rebellious hearts may rise

Seeking a longer stay—
Tears or entreaties can't procure
A moment's more delay.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Does genius in the human mind
 Blaze with a brilliant light ?
 Reason itself one day may fall and be dethron'd,
 Leaving the maniac's wilder'd heart without a helm
 To steer life's mazy course along.
 A world of uncertainty is this,
 No certain good, no certain happiness ;
 And joys and pleasures, which in this world
 abound,
 Are oft as hollow and unsatisfying as an empty
 sound.
 Come, let us to the heavens then lift our eyes
 And seek a certain happiness above the skies ;
 For all beyond the grave is fixed certainty—
 A certain bliss or woe awaits both you and me.

 MY BONNIE HOLLY TREE.

Thou only wert two little twigs
 When first I planted thee,
 But now thou'rt grown both tall and broad,
 My bonnie Holly Tree.
 When all the bushes round are bare,
 Nor flower can we see,
 Thou still art green throughout the year,
 My gladsome Holly Tree.
 I cut my name upon thy stalk,
 As all who look may see,
 To tell how much I do esteem,
 My own sweet Holly Tree.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

SONG OF SADNESS.

And art thou gone, and gone for ever ?
 And with thee gone the hope and love of years ;
 Alas ! that hearts so fond and true are forced to
 sever,
 Causing to flow the salt and briny tears.
 Ah! thou may'st sail across the ocean,
 And live in other lands where thy wandering
 steps have gone ;
 But can any other heart e'er feel the same devotion
 This heart of mine hath felt for thee alone ?
 Though intervening years of grief and sadness
 Hath in succession come and gone ;
 Yet on life's waste, like oasis spots of gladness,
 Thy welcome visits on my youth hath shone.
 Won't thou repent that vow so rashly spoken,
 And bless us with thy presence yet anon ;
 For the woes with which this heart is almost broken,
 This, this, and nought but this, can e'er atone.

AFFECTION, OR, I COULD BE A LITTLE CHILD.

O! I could be a little child,
 Stand by a father's knee,
 And feel his hand stroke down my head,
 As he'd kindly speak to me.
 For life is but a wilderness
 If there's no affection there ;
 Its worth is greater far than gems,
 Or jewels rich and rare.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

One little spark within the heart
 Will keep a-glowing there
 (Though all without be cold and dark),
 And chase away despair.

When the mind is press'd with care and grief,
 Then 'twill come with angel wing
 To soothe away the thorny smart,
 Pour oil of comfort in.

Both high and low alike will know
 This balm is heaven born—
 What an aching void the heart must feel
 When its fragrant breath is gone.

The Queen herself, I'll dare to say,
 Will feel more pleasure in the love of her
 domestic home,
 Than when circled round by lords of state,
 Or seated on the throne.

For all that wealth or pomp can give,
 Are but cold and cheerless things ;
 And when fame shouts loudly with applause,
 A deceitful syren sings.

O nurse in youth this lovely flower
 In the garden of your heart :
 'Twill shed a warmth and brightness there,
 When all joys besides depart.

For the heart is but a wilderness
 If there's no affection there ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

It's worth is greater far than gems,
Or jewels rich and rare.

O! I could be a little child,
Stand by a father's knee,
And feel his hand stroke down my head,
As he'd kindly speak to me.

WRITTEN IN MEMORY OF JOHN STEVENSON, MY
BROTHER, WHO DIED AT WOODSIDE IN 1850.

'Tis like a dream since thou wert married,
So short a time it seems bygone,
Since at the Holms of Caaf we tarried
Thy wedded wife to carry home.

And since that night at bridal supper,
At Woodside no such gathering hath been ;
Till they had borne away thy mournful bier,
And thy last lowly, resting place had seen.

The livery gloves, then signs of gladness,
Are now as mourning tokens seen ;
And all that mirth is turn'd to sadness
That lighted up that festive e'en.

That hearth round which thy family gather'd,
Where centred all thy earthly bliss,
By one sad stroke is desolated,
Wife widow'd, children fatherless.

May He who is the friend of widows,
To her solace and strength impart ;
Take 'neath His care these little children,
To virtue mould each youthful heart.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

1852, WRITTEN ON KILWINNING PARISH PLOUGH-
ING MATCH, BEING HELD IN A FIELD AT WOOD.

GOING TO THE PLOUGHING MATCH FIELD.

Do you ask where I'm going
 This fine winter day,
 O'er the fields lightly tripping,
 So merry and gay?

Do you ask what's my errand
 That brooks no delay?
 That to give you short answer,
 I hardly can stay.

'Tis the brave of the parish
 I'm going to see;
 'Tis the flower of the youth
 That are turning the lea.

There's health on their cheek,
 There's a smile in their e'e;
 The blythe, frank, country lads,
 Are the lads for me.

To give them a welcome,
 Both hearty and true,
 My heart bounded up,
 But what could I do?

The best way I knew,
 Was by presence to shew,
 Their exertions I slight not,
 Though silent I go.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

You may think this a place
 Where no woman should go,
 Exposing themselves
 As 'twere for public show :
 But I may remind you,
 The Leap Year you know ;
 As excuse for a romp,
 May a little way go.
 Besides, 'tis the place
 Where in childhood I roam'd ;
 Like wild lambkin lighthearted,
 I gamboll'd along.
 And save near the Wood,
 There's few faces I know—
 Could I miss this fine sight ?
 Friends and neighbours, ah ! no.

 THE EMIGRANT YOUTH.—SONG.

And is he gone ? and is he going ?
 Far, far away ;
 Left his country and his home
 To cross the Atlantic way.
 He's sailing for a distant land,
 May the breeze be blowing fair,
 And waft him safely to its strand,
 His heart's already there.
 Will he never think of Scotland,
 Or of his childhood's home ?

HOMELY MUSINGS.

When a stranger without relative,
 He wanders there alone.
 Or of father, or mother, or sister, or brother;
 Or of some fair maid forlorn ?
 Left sighing for her lover,
 From her embraces torn.
 And has he bid a long adieu
 To all he left behind ?
 And will other scenes and friendships new
 Around his heart be twin'd ?
 And will he ne'er return again
 To Britain's peaceful shore ;
 Or can his heart be so estrang'd
 As to think of her no more ?
 May fortune's star be smiling
 To lighten up his way ;
 To him health, wealth, peace, honour come,
 Link'd with integrity.

H O M E :

When gazing upon nature's lovely face,
 The thought upstarts—O could I paint
 With brush or pencil's glowing art,
 I would present you with a picture,
 Fraught with all that's fair and beautiful
 That could delight the eye and please the heart.
 I'd paint a sky of lovely blue,
 Where here and there doth fleecy cloud repose ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

As 't were a mark whereon the sun all bright,
 And scattering warmth and light, might cast
 The splendour of his radiant tints.
 And I would paint the gently swelling heights
 That rise from little vales by which the Garnock mur-
 muring sweeps,
 Where merry angler sometimes comes
 For recreative sport, to catch the unwary trout.
 And I would paint the trees that fringe that stream,
 Clad in the summer's livery, all green ;
 Among whose downy leaves the zephyrs play,
 And breezes sweetly sigh to song of birds
 That hop amongst the boughs ;
 Or pleasant thrush that sits upon some towering branch
 And chants its merry lay from early morn to e'en.
 And I would paint the little rillet trinkling down the
 steep,
 All pure and crystalline, such as would cheer the heart
 Of weary traveller, straying in some desert waste,
 Far from the abodes of man, with tongue all parch'd,
 Who sighs for some fount whereat to slake his thirst,
 And greets the prospect of one cooling draught
 With greater joy than gold in glittering heaps.
 And I would paint the cattle browsing on the fields,
 Then lying down content ; and harmless sheep
 That graze with sportive lambs that, full of
 Gleeful mirth and innocence, will dance and frisk about.
 And I would paint the timid hare, with footsteps light,
 Bounding across our path in wild affright,
 With hasty strides soon out of sight ;
 And flock of partridge starting in alarm,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

With noisy sound upon the wing, pursue their speedy
flight

To some more distant or secure retreat.

The chirping grasshopper and gaudy butterfly

That lightly floats upon the air, and busy bees

That hum from flower to flower,

To gather from their cups a load of sweets.

And I would paint those flowers

In wild profusion springing up,

Not such as dwell in gardens delicate,

That need the hand of careful gardener

To cultivate and watch their tender growth ;

But plain and simple as the healthful country maid,
robust,

Inur'd to cold and hardiness.

And I would paint the dews that nightly fall,

Refreshing trees, and flowers, and every herb,

O'erhung with pearly drops, that with the daily heat

Of summer's sun, without this grateful bath

Would all be scorch'd and wither'd up.

I need not tell you of the lark, the merry lark,

The poets tell of such, and thou hast doubtless read or
heard

The poet's tale; they love to tell of all that's beautiful,

And their comprehensive minds have left few themes
untouch'd.

This is a sketch of such a picture I would paint you,

And that picture would be home ;

But I must cease, and should this paper chance

To fall into the hands of some cold critic,

They may laugh and wonder why a girl

HOMELY MUSINGS.

(Surely an enthusiast) should thus descant
 Upon a spot wherein they saw no loveliness ;
 At least indifferent when compar'd with others,
 And surpass'd by thousands in our native land
 That never had a pen once lifted up, to tell their worth,
 Or set their beauty forth.
 I may be prejudic'd, this is my birthplace,
 Spot where I have spent my life from earliest infancy ;
 Nurs'd up amongst the scenes I have describ'd,
 And seldom mixing with mankind in mutual converse.
 A wild and solitary thing have thus contract
 A love for things inanimate ;
 Or like the Swiss or Laplanders who love their country
 And their native hills, though wild and bleak,
 And when transplant to climes more warm and sunny,
 Fairer far to other eyes than theirs,
 Will sigh, and pine, and sometimes die
 Of broken heart.

 COMPANIONS OF MY YOUTHFUL YEARS.

COMPANIONS of my youthful years,
 Bright girls ! where are they now ?
 Ah ! death hath laid his icy hand
 Upon each fair young brow.

Those faces once with pleasant smiles
 Were warmly brighten'd o'er ;
 Alas, on earth no loving smiles
 Shall ever light them more.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

With one I wander'd far from hence,
 Where liv'd our common friend ;
 And 'mongst fields where stood her father's cot,
 We hours together did spend.

And one there was, a beauteous girl,
 A widow's only child ;
 Bade fair to crown her highest hopes,
 But deceitful hope beguil'd.

And one, my fair kinswoman too,
 A comfort to her parents given ;
 To all on earth must bid adieu,
 From her fond parents sadly riven.

On them their mother's love and care
 Was centred much I ween—
 Now who will cheer their aching hearts,
 Or soothe their sorrows keen ?

Why are my thoughts thus o'er the past
 All wandering sad and strange ?
 Is it the natural effect
 Of time's incessant change ?

Why melancholy settling down
 Upon this weary heart ?
 So very sad and lone,
 That nought can joy impart.

Is it that this heart hath lov'd
 Too well the joys of earth ?
 Those transient joys are doom'd to die,
 So soon as they have birth.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Father of all thou art,
 All powerful and wise ;
 Thou break'st the ties that bind our hearts to
 earth,
 That they to heaven may rise.

Were our lives to glide away 'mongst friends,
 An unbroken blissful dream ,
 Then who would ever wish to die,
 And earth all joyous seem.

But when we see mankind cut down
 Of every rank, and sex, and age,
 Then we think life's drama soon must end,
 All actors quit this world's stage.

SWEET IS REPOSE TO THE TOILWORN AND WEARY.

O! sweet is repose to the toilworn and weary,
 Whatever the calling or work they pursue ;
 And pleasant and sweet will the prospect of rest be,
 When through trouble and darkness it rises to
 view.

O! sweet is repose to the poor weary labourer,
 Whose vigour and strength have begun to decay ;
 He'll not mind in the midst of his calm peaceful
 slumbers
 The toils he endur'd in the heat of the day.

O! sweet is repose to the industrious farmer,
 Who toils in all seasons, be cold or hot the day ;
 When he sees in his barnyard all safe out of danger,
 A plentiful crop will his labours repay.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

- O! sweet is repose to the mariner, weary,
 Opposing the might of the proud dashing wave,
 That threaten'd the vessel to engulf in its fury,
 And sweep all on board to a watery grave.
- O! sweet is repose from the terrible slaughter,
 When the soldier unneeded, his sword flings away,
 That was cover'd with gore in the heat of the battle,
 And struck to the heart of each victim dismay.
- O! sweet is repose to the lone 'nighted traveller,
 When in some unknown desert his wandering
 steps stray,
 Far, far from the home that his former life shelter'd,
 From all that he loved on earth, far away.
- O! sweet is repose to the poor weak invalid,
 Has been toss'd day and night on a sick bed of
 pain ;
 When the pleasure of sleep has return'd to his eye-
 lids,
 And he feels the sweet solace of slumber again.
- O! sweet is repose to all lone friendless orphans,
 Find no arm on earth to support or to stay ;
 'Twill be sweet to forget in their blissful night
 visions
 The griefs on their hearts that incessantly prey.
- O! sweet is repose to the sad brokenhearted,
 Have found all earth's treasures, they do but
 decay ;
 From whose bosom all pleasures and joys have
 departed—
 Once fondly nurs'd there, but now all fled away.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

O! sweet is repose to the heart of a monarch,
 When his subjects are all of them loyal and true ;
 When his land is at peace with the neighbouring
 nations,
 Nor prospect of war with the distant in view.

O! sweet is repose to the heart of the Christian,
 When this world's temptations and trials got
 through ;
 He submissively yields up to death his frail body,
 Bids to sin and to sorrow forever adieu.

 THE THUNDER SHOWER.

Peter, pater ! peter, pater ;
 Hurrying down falls the rain—
 None need complain a lack of water,
 Roads are flowing like the main.

Thunder clouds, dark and gloomy,
 Heavily above us frown ;
 Amongst trees, and shrubs, and flowers,
 A flood of moisture pouring down.

Gladsome 'tis to feel the sunshine ;
 Dreadful 'tis to view the storm ;
 Strange to hear the hailstones rattle,
 See snow flakes dance of every form.

But peter, pater ! peter, pater !
 Hurrying down falls the rain,
 With its ceaseless, endless clatter,
 Filling every chink and drain.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

These various changes, all are lightsome ;
 The frowning cloud, the sweet sunlight;
 The winter snows, the summer flowers ;
 The bustling day, the sleepy night.

Every thing on earth is changing ;
 All our lives are fraught with change—
 Weeping sorrow, mirthful laughter,
 Mingle in one medley strange.

S O N G .

ASHGROVE, OR, THE DESERTED MANSION.

I am come to Ashgrove, and I knock at the door,
 But no one doth answer ; 'twas ne'er thus before ;
 If there's nobody in, then I see no one out,
 A-doing their work the large courtyard about.

I'll step into the kitchen and see if they're there,
 If the lady herself does the dinner prepare ;
 Ah ! no ; for the pots and the pans are all gone,
 And the kitchen is naked, deserted, and lone.

The table is gone that was loaded with meat,
 And gone with the table is each diner's seat ;
 And the lady is gone, and her maidens all,
 And empty and cold is the parlour and hall.

And where are they gone ?—are they gone to bed ?
 To the bedrooms I'll slip, quite gently I'll tread ;
 Ah ! no ; there's no lady or maids for to greet,
 And each bedstead is stript of bed, pillow, and sheet.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Then I'll go to the washing house, and see if they're there,

If in cleaning the bedclothes they're taking a care ;
 Ah ! no ; for no washing tub now can be seen,
 Nor water a-heating, nor clothes for to clean.

I'll look into the dairy-house, then, if you please,
 And see if they're there, making butter and cheese ;
 Ah ! no ; there's no milkmaid, cheese, butter, or milk,
 Nor milk pail, boyne, cheese vat, or dish of that ilk.

Then I'll go to the byre, see if they can be seen,
 A-milking or feeding, or making them clean ;
 Ah ! no ; in the byre no cow can I find,
 To call for attention of any kind.

Can they be in the barn, then, a-thrashing the corn ?
 'Tis the time of the thrashing,—the fields are all
 shorn ;

Ah ! no ; in the barn there's no thrashers to hail,
 And the barn it is empty,—no corn, sack, or flail.

Then I'll go to the garden and see if they're there,
 Amongst the fruit trees and the flowers so fair ;
 Ah ! no ; there the grass like a carpet is found ;
 And solitude seems to be reigning around.

Has the lady then gone on a visit, I pray ?
 Does she mean to return, and at no distant day ?
 Ah ! the carriage is gone, but it did not bear
 Away from Ashgrove the lady once here.

The truth I must tell, and 'tis this I now say,
 The old lady who liv'd here for many a long day,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Who feasted her guests when each new year cameround,
 Till their mirth and their glee made her hall to
 'zesound :

'Tis indeed from Ashgrove she is gone away now,
 For death laid his weighty chill hand on her brow ;
 To the village churchyard then they bore her away,
 And they laid her to rest, with her cold sister-clay.

And I cannot tell where her maids are all gone—
 To employment of others, or work of their own ;
 But you now know the reason why no lady you see,
 None living here at Ashgrove excepting me.

Thus the longest journey must come to an end,
 And the longest stream with the ocean waters blend,
 And the longest life must come to a close,
 And all living at last in death repose.

S O N G .

THE GARNOCK AND ITS BONNIE BRAES.

The Doon to Burns did pleasant seem ;
 Most fresh and fair its banks and braes ;
 But sweet to me is Garnock stream,
 Where by the Wood it winding strays.

In summer or in winter day
 To me 'tis still a lovely scene,
 When leafless boughs with snow hang gay,
 Or rob'd in rich luxuriant green.

Those gentle heights from which one looks
 Down on each pleasant little vale ;
 The quiet, charming, fairy nooks,
 Of shelter from the stormy gale.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Those spots call up into my mind
 The thought of lands far, far away,
 Of hills and vales all sweetly wild,
 Where human foot doth seldom stray.

Where wild deers on the mountain tops
 Are skipping lightly as the wind ;
 And fearless goats 'mongst craggy rocks
 Climb boldly where they have a mind.

No wild deer skip on Garnock banks,
 Nor humming birds sit on the boughs ;
 But the lark and thrush their sweet songs chant,
 And cattle feed upon the knowes.

And dear to me is Garnock banks,
 As fairest spot of any land,
 Where bounteous nature all her gifts
 Has scatter'd with a lavish hand.

Can any live and not delight
 In flower, tree, or winding stream ?
 Than halls in dazzling splendour bright
 To me far pleasanter they seem.

Un sullied is the air we breath,
 And there our steps are light and free ;
 Away from city's smoky wreath —
 Wood, field, and stream, are fair to me.

Yes, dear they reckon bonnie Doon,
 And sweet they sing its banks and braes ;
 But dear to me is Garnock stream,
 Where by the Wood it winding strays.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

SONG OF THE BELL.

When Hendrie cast Saint Winning's Bell
 He had a daughter born they say ;
 And he'd call his little daughter Bell,
 To honour that auspicious day.
 And every time the big bell tolls,
 To little Bell 'twill say—
 Kilwinning first saw you and I
 Upon an April day.
 They have hung me up, far out of sight,
 But you'll hear me every day,
 For I speak so loud, they may sometimes hear
 My voice long miles away.
 And when I speak give earnest heed
 To every word, I pray—
 At six in the morning I'll call are you up ?
 Ten at night go to bed I will say.
 And when the Sabbath day comes round,
 Then to Church you must come away ;
 For faithfully I warn all then
 To keep that blessed day.
 My voice is so strong, you would almost be deav'd
 If you were standing by ;
 But I'm calling the labourers far up the fields,
 That now to their homes they may hie.
 Men and women that toil 'neath a sultry sky
 Till weary their hands are and feet ;
 At evening how gladly they welcome my tongue,
 No voice is so pleasant and sweet.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

I call them to work on the summer morn
 When the sun is bright and high ;
 In the dark winter mornings I'll waken them too
 Their household employments to ply.

For you must always bear in mind
 That I am placed here
 To warn the country round and round,
 But home must be your sphere.

If you're spared like me for a useful life,
 Give to duty time and place that is meet ;
 Let the law of kindness dwell on your tongue
 To soothe with its melody sweet.

And now little Bell, ere I bid you farewell,
 Just listen to what I will say,
 When wedded you are, if nothing debar,
 I will chant on your marriage day.

But, if first you do die, then I'll dolefully cry,
 Alack, alackaday ;
 When my darling Bell, that lov'd me so well,
 To the grave they are carrying away.

For every time the big bell tolls
 'Twill call to memory,
 How Bell was born, and it recast,
 One smiling April day.

 THE WANDERING DOG.

Dog, who is thy master ?
 Where's thy home ?

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Does no one care for thee,
 As o'er the country thou dost roam ?
 Thou looks't sagacious,
 Like a dog which one might prize.
 Fain would we fondle thee ;
 But were it wise
 On thee with kindness to smile,
 From thy true home thee further to beguile,
 From which thou seem'st to be
 A straying all the while.
 Wast thou the chained guard of some farm house ?
 Or, running loose, didst thou take out and in the
 cows ?
 Or, when the ploughman to the field did hie,
 Loath to be left behind, wast thou still running bye ?
 Or, when with carts, from home they went away,
 Go where they would, did'st thou there spend the day ?
 And when thy master absent was,
 And did come back again,
 Wast thou to welcome his return,
 Exceeding glad and fain ?
 Dog, what is thy name ?
 Were there no children ~~who~~ knew it well ?
 But human language thou can't speak,
 Thou therefore can'st not tell.
 Hast thou a memory ? or hast thou now forgot ?
 Where was thy home ? was not it a pleasaut spot ?
 Did they not give thee food each day ?
 Did children never come with thee
 To frolic and to play ?
 Did no one stroke thy head and say,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

My bonnie dog, my bonnie Tray ?
 Poor dog, I pity thee,
 A wanderer thou art ;
 And all may pity thee
 Who'er have felt that loneliness of heart —
 Will creep o'er those who once have had a home,
 Where peace and plenty was ;
 And then are forc'd to roam.
 By lot of changeful fortune thrown,
 On a cold world to wander all alone—
 Nor ever meet a face, but faces that are strange,
 And finds this world is but a place
 Of never ceasing change.

THE BIBLE.

Many books we may read,
 But this book is the best ;
 It gives sight to the blind,
 To the weary-hearted rest.
 It gives riches to the poor,
 And comfort when in grief ;
 'Tis a storehouse that is full
 Of all blessings that are chief.
 Many pleasant books are written,
 If aught's really good in them ;
 They have borrowed their lustre
 From this book, hath many a gem.
 'Tis the fountainhead of knowledge,
 Whence the streams of truth do flow ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

'Tis as a pleasant garden
 Where fruits all seasons grow.
 Without this lamp, earth's travellers
 In ignorance and darkness stray ;
 'Tis a star will show the road to heaven,
 And cheer us all the way.

CRITICS, OR THE WORLD'S TWO GREAT EXTREMES.

In this world there's two great extremes,
 The middle, the straight line of duty men calls ;
 We are prone to veer from this line on all sides,
 And stumble in error's pitfalls.

And you see in this world there's a great many
 folk,

And a great many critics there be ;
 In whatever you say or whatever you do,
 A good or bad spirit they see.

If you to too much religion pretend,
 As a hypocrite you will be blam'd ;
 If little or none you profess at all,
 Then as profligate you will be fam'd.

If you have got little or nothing to say,
 Then they'll say you're too proud to speak ;
 But if you indulge in a great deal of talk,
 Then you're surely puff'd up with conceit.

If you choose to say just as you think,
 Then they'll say you are silly and simple ;
 If you venture to steer aside from the truth,
 Then who will believe when you wimple ?

HOMELY MUSINGS.

If you freely speak out whatever you know,
Then no secret they'll say you can keep ;
If cautious of what you to others disclose,
Then to keep all things hidden you seek.

If you are in the habit of staying at home,
Then they'll say in a basket you're kept ;
But if you are given to running abroad,
Such indulgences they would restrict.

If you are exceedingly careful,
They'll say you're a niggardly miser ;
But if you're exceedingly lavish,
They'll call you extravagant waster.

If you're decked out in a gaudy dress,
They'll say you are fond of display and show ;
But if your attire's too simple and plain,
Then your notions are certainly vulgar and low.

If your table be frugally spread,
Then you're parsimonious and mean ;
But you're keeping a house like a lord or a duke,
If the good things of life there be seen—

It's pay to all whatever you owe ;
If you can, be not debtor to stranger or brother ;
For there's nothing so hateful as making a show
With what would by right belong to another.

It's better to fare on the simplest meal,
By the work of your hands you get,
Than on dainties and luxuries be pamper'd and fed,
If they throw their consumer in debt.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

It's better to be clad in a homely garb,
 By honest industry spun ;
 Than a garment trim'd with gold and lace,
 By fraud and dishonesty won.

It's better to live in a little cot,
 And peace and comfort within,
 Than to dwell in a palace of splendour bright,
 Whilst dreading a creditor's din.

If you're bless'd with enough of this world's goods,
 Take wholesome and nourishing food ;
 Let your raiment be such as is useful and warm,
 Securing your health's greatest good.

For health it is sweet, though simple its name,
 When compared with dazzling wealth ;
 Health may procure gold, but gold can't ease pain,
 Or restore us the sweets of health.

Then try by the straight line of duty to go,
 Nor care what the critics they say ;
 For they'd have a Herculean task to perform
 Who'd try to please them all for a day.

For the critics like others they run to extremes,
 Their arguments flimsy and hollow ;
 They hew out a path of a thousand ways,
 And 'tis one they themselves cannot follow.

 MY BIRTHPLACE.

Cold winds are blowing o'er that hearth
 Where a fire once shone bright and fair ?

HOMELY MUSINGS.

And you wonder what's that hearth to me,
 Ah! I was nursed there.

And that house, it was my birthplace,
 Which a stable now is made ;
 On a bed where the horses now are standing
 When an infant, I was laid.

How many born there I cannot tell,
 Since that house was built long past ;
 But many or few, this alone I know well,
 That of children born there, I was the last.

And I never can think of my birthplace now,
 But it vividly calls to my mind,
 How the greatest guest that the earth ever saw
 Was when born, to a stable confin'd.

In love to mankind he look'd down from the skies,
 And he saw them oppress'd with a terrible load;
 To relieve them his glory he chose to disguise,
 And endure for their sakes heaven's weightiest
 rod.

Though the world with its wealth and its fulness
 was His,
 And he could have been born anywhere ;
 Yet he stop'd as an outcast from human abodes,
 Far from splendour of palaces fair.

Though mean seem'd that spot, yet the angels
 drew nigh,
 And in songs loudly lifted their voice—
 To welcome a birth, gave the children of men,
 The greatest of cause to rejoice.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

How different the thoughts of the children of men,
 So prone to admire earth's grandeur and show;
 A birth as all joyful, they hail only when
 The trumpet of fame and of fortune doth blow.

Now his sufferings are o'er with the price of his
 blood—

Their freedom from guilt he hath wrought ;
 His work is complete, and with pleasure He looks
 On the souls which His travail hath bought.

And His love is so great, though' He lives in the
 sky,

He stoops down to the meanest on earth ;
 For though now exalted above all on high,
 He forgets not the place of His birth.

 JEANIE FLEMING, OR THE BEEF LOVING LASS.

Did you see Jeanie Fleming
 Rinnin' frae the Wuid ?
 She couldna stay there
 For the meat wasna guid.

She got caul' broth to dinner,
 What she ne'er afore saw ;
 Potatoes, saut, and milk,
 And nae beef ava.

She didna care for parritch,
 'Twas on tea she did depen' ;
 Skim-milk and skim-milk cheese
 She ne'er afore did ken.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

She tells that her parritch
 Was the scartings o' the pat ;
 And wi' sicna like feedin'
 Could ony lass be fat ?

It's no like the place
 Where she was afore ;
 They had baith a big bullock
 And swine laid in store.

For a maister she had
 Was a true gentleman ;
 His servants he fed
 Wi' a bounteous han'.

Wi' great lumps o' beef,
 And 'platefu's o' ham,
 They were fed tae the full
 As fu's they could cram.

They got tea twice a day,
 And guid sweet milk cheese ;
 And a' things sae nice,
 Micht an epicure please.

The houses were braw,
 Convenient an' gran' ;
 The midden was wall'd,
 The ause midden at han'.

The trains on the railway
 They ran close by,
 It was heartsome to see them
 As they merrily did fly.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

In a bothy at nicht
 The men were tae sit,
 But the lasses did choose
 Tae be often in it.

For their wark was aye dune
 Ere the clock did seven strike ;
 Then tae caper an' tae dance
 As lang as they did like.

Why left she the fine place ?
 O, wasna she daft ?
 She's like mony a ane else,
 Kens na when she's weel aff.

She maun watch wha she marries,
 Lest she e'er come tae want,
 Or be left a puir widow,
 And her stock o' meat be scant.

Should the plague make beef scarce,
 As may yet come to pass,
 O ! what will become
 Of this beef loving lass ?

O ! faithers an' mithers,
 Wha wish your bairns weel,
 Bid them aye tae stick up
 Tae an eatable meal.

Lest lea'in' their dinners
 The time should arise,
 That they wud be glad
 To lick whar it lies.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Lad or lass, wha tae serve
 Frae your parents ha'e gane,
 O ! ne'er mak' yoursel'
 Like a stodgen big wean,

That turns fae its meat
 An' says I'll no tak' it,
 Till hunger at length
 Compels it tae snap it.

Have a spirit more brave
 (If the strength you don't lack),
 Than on wark, like a coward,
 You should e'er turn your back.

And when next tae the market
 Jeanie Fleming gangs tae fee,
 I hope in the bargain
 She'll mind beef and tea.

And speir if the folk
 And the houses are guid,
 And ne'er mak' a blun'er
 As she did at the Wuid.

When speaking o' meats,
 O' this, and o' that,
 Being guid to the taste
 Or apt tae make fat.

I have read of a lad
 Whose size was so great,
 To himself quite a burden
 Of corpulent weight.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Doctors tried everything,
 And at last it was seen,
 That on milk he'd grown fat,
 Then on beef he grew lean.

Like the children on pulse
 With the Persian King,
 Simple milk made him fat,
 Then rich beef made him lean.

THE BETRAYER.

I thought he was a decent lad,
 And his word maist worth believing,
 But I found him out a lying loon,
 Notorious for deceiving.

I went and stood at his father's gate,
 Upon his marriage day—
 I wanted to see how a villain could look
 On the woman he could betray.

A gig came forth—two sat thereon ;
 When one of them saw me,
 Like a coward he spread his hands o'er his face,
 That his face I might not see.

He's ta'en a lass awa' frae Ayr,
 His ways she surely disna ken ;
 Or if she kens, she's easy pleased—
 She maybe thinks his ways he'll men'.

Wi' her he may skulk tae the Highland hills,
 Tae his stewardship in the Highlands,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

And nae mair betray the simple maids
That are living in the Lowlands.

It were better far for many a lass,
If her raking laddie's mother
Wad dae as the farmers dae wi' their stots—
Just tie them up in a corner.

SONG OF THE ENGINEERS.

*Written on hearing a large body of Engineers at Kilmarnock
going regularly along Langlands Street to their work, at the
Railway Shops, and the Caledonian and Vulcan Foundries.*

What a sound of march, marching,
In the morning do I hear!
A ceaseless sound of pattering feet
Falls on my listening ear.

No war is in our country,
Nor rumour of war I hear,
Or I'd think it was an army,
Would chill our blood with fear.

For a noise of march, marching,
Every morning do I hear,
A noise of many tramping feet
Are somewhere passing near.

No soldiers are going to battle,
To meet with wound or scar,
But men to study the arts of peace,
Instead of the arts of war.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

'Tis the workmen in the morning,
 Whose hasty steps we hear,
 Hurrying to the workshop,
 Each skilful engineer.

'Tis the sound of their march, marching,
 In the morning we do hear ;
 The lively beat of their pattering feet
 Falls on our listening ear.

Long may peace be in our island,
 And of peace each gentle art,
 To bless alike both high and low,
 And gladden every heart.

That the sound of march, marching,
 In the morning we may hear,
 Of industrious men to the workshop,
 May greet our listening ear.

 SONG OF THE PLOUGHMEN.

Long may the sons of Britain plough their land,
 And the plough be uncheck'd by invading hand ;
 Long strive to excel in the healthful toil,
 Of turning over the fruit-bearing soil.

Were the farmers to give up this useful art,
 From our island prosperity would quickly depart ;
 Then Britons would cease to be brave and free,
 Cringing slaves to a cruel tyranny.

Many bright lands, where grapes are hanging on each
 bough,
 Lie barren and wild for the lack of the plough ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

For the want of a people industrious and free,
 They are desert and waste from sea to sea.

Soon may the nations to ploughshares beat,
 Their swords that now clash in the battle's heat ;
 From the horrors of war for ever cease,
 And study the gentler arts of peace.

And in Scotland may peace long unbroken remain,
 No trumpet of war heard, but music's sweet strain,
 All hearts with pure innocent gladness to fill,
 And may plenty long cover each valley and hill.

And long in the well-known county of Ayr,
 Far-fam'd o'er the world everywhere,
 May the ploughboy content, drive his horses along,
 Whistling a tune or carolling a song.

And long in this parish may they yearly greet,
 A ploughing match day, if they think it meet ;
 Each ploughman endeavouring his best for to do—
 Good ploughmen all, though a prize be won by few.

SONG OF REGRET.

I HAD A SWEETHEART ONCE.

I had a sweetheart once,
 And well he loved me ;
 He was no worthless dunce,
 Whoever look'd might see.

He came to win my heart,
 I answer'd saucily,
 Which caus'd him to depart,
 Lonely leaving me.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Though careless quite I seem'd,
 Deep in my heart I loved ;
 But how well I never dream'd,
 Till from my reach remov'd.

Can his love have waxed cold ?
 He vowed once so warm ;
 Or, as the public told,
 Does some fairer maiden charm ?

Will he ne'er return again ?
 Has he gone, alas, for aye ?
 Though my tears should fall like rain,
 Or for pity I should pray.

O ! maidens, warning take ;
 Don't say to true love, nay,
 Lest your lover's heart you break,
 Or at least he go away.

Or at least he go away,
 And leave you all forlorn.
 'Twas my fault will conscience say ?
 When your heart's with anguish torn.

When your heart's with anguish torn,
 And your sighing every day,
 With a grief can scarce be borne,
 For a lov'd one gone away.

For one gone, you might have won,
 And the world all dull and cold ;
 And no prospect but the heartless one—
 To live a maiden old.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

So, maidens, warning take,
Don't say to true love, nay,
Lest love his heart forsake,
And at last he go away.

SONG OF THE SPRING.

Spring, sweet spring, emblem of infancy,
The childhood of the new-born year,
With joyful hearts we welcome thee,
Thy sunny smile and dewy tear.

The farmer sows his seed, and now 'tis springing ;
He hopes for harvest with its yellow store,
When the staff of life to man and beast is bringing,
Bidding all hearts the Giver of all good adore.

Myriads of pretty flowers are peeping
Forth to the light of smiling day,
From winter beds, where they were sleeping,
Buried, as if they'd been death's prey.

The sun is now our pole approaching,
Nearer and nearer every day ;
And the naked trees again are dressing
Themselves in beautiful array.

Spring ! bright spring ! the earth's reviver,
Our hearts, and all things else to cheer,
Millions of new-born creatures bringing,
To make thy coming doubly dear.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

The lambs are chasing one another
 In gleeful frolics merrily;
 And the young calves in the field are racing,
 Beginning of a sober life they're gay.

With music every grove is ringing,
 From songsters perch'd on many a spray ;
 Glad thoughts in us their pleasant notes are stirring,
 To make our hearts as light and blythe as they.

I hear the lark, with its merry carol,
 Mounting upward toward the sky,
 And I'm thinking of the pretty swallow,
 That will be coming by-and-bye.

In the wood I hear the cuckoo cooing,
 That voice that speaks, the winter is away ;
 And I hear the wild dove amorously wooing,
 Warm'd with the beauties of the lovely May.

Youth is of life the spring and seedtime,
 Sow well we should, that good then come there
 may ;
 Who thinks to reap fair harvests in the autumn,
 Whose lands unsown, is left to weeds a prey ?

Spring ! fresh spring ! the world reviving,
 Our hearts and all things else to cheer,
 With right good will we welcome thee,
 With sunny smile and dewy tear.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

TRIP TO DUMFRIES.

ON the 2nd of August, 1860, I went to Dumfries in company with my brothers and cousin, ~~Francis~~^{Miss} Stevenson, to see the great Highland Society Show, which was held there that day. They say Dumfries is between seventy and eighty miles from Kilwinning. At almost every station the grounds are planted with flowers. Sanquhar had a pretty plot, and Dumfries station, which I think was the largest, was especially beautiful with shrubs and flowers planted in front. We had an opportunity, as the train hastily carried us along, of getting a slight glimpse of the country as we passed. Away by Mauchline, Ballochmyle, Auchinleck, and Old Cumnock, the scenery I thought was beautiful; green fields sloping down from hills to vales, in which the villages stood; and all the face of the country adorned with plantations, clad in their summer robes. But, as far as I recollect, the country away by New Cumnock, and beyond it a long way, is hilly, ~~hilly~~^{bare}, and wild-looking, but growing more level and arable like towards Dumfries. The show field at Dumfries was crowded all day. I heard a man say (one who had information from another person, who knew from the number of tickets given out) that there was a number of thousands on the field before ten o'clock. It was, I think, one of the greatest shows or gatherings I ever saw; but, for aught I know, they may be larger elsewhere. Round one side of the field a shed had been put up, with stalls in which the horses were standing; and down that side of the field there were other rows

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of sheds (wholly constructed of wood), having a partition in the middle of each shed, and a row of stalls on each side—in which the bulls, cows, sheep, and swine were standing: every one in their own place. In a shed, too, there was poultry; and in another there was butter and cheese. There was also a row of sheds for getting refreshments in, and a shed, too, for the committee to meet in. The cattle were, I think, very fat—hanging with beef. There was a good number of horses. There were also two or three very little ponies. There were large black bulls and cows without horns, of the Galloway sort; and there was large white ones, of the Teeswater breed; there was also cattle of the Irish or Highland sort, with horns of a great size and width betwixt them, one of them especially, I think there would be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards or more betwixt the points of its horns. Besides the common Ayrshire kind, there were two or three very small cows, in size like an Ayrshire stirk—a French breed I heard some one say. The pigs, too, were large and fat; one particularly—it was, I think, as large as a cow. There was also one very large sheep; its head was looking out from a mass of mutton and wool. Of the sheep there were various sorts, some with four horns—two of the horns were long and straight, and two small ones. There were common white sheep without horns; and there were sheep with crooked horns; and there were sheep with speckled faces, black and white. Of the poultry, besides the common species, there were cocks and hens of the bantam kind; also Spanish, Chinese, and game sorts; and there were ducks, geese, and

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turkeys. The implements were lying or standing in rows, which ran from the sheds across to the other side of the field. In one corner there were two or three thrashing machines (one of them was driven by steam), which kept up a continual din in that part of the field : whilst a lot of machinery in another corner made a continual noise there. There were machines for cutting chaff, and reaping machines—amongst the rest Lord Kinnaird's prize reaping machine. There were rows of ploughs, harrows, grubbers, machines for cutting grass walks, machines for sowing seeds, machines for washing turnips, and machines for cutting them ; carts, gigs, harness, whips, mats, horse stalls, troughs, spades, grates with oven, and other appendages for boiling and roasting, and hot water ; summer seats, granite headstones, churns, cheese presses, washing machines, butter prints, boynes, cheese vats, boilers, stands for building stacks on, weighing machines, and tile machines. So many things there were, indeed, I may have forgotten to mention some of them. From an account of the show in a local newspaper, there were of implements, 911 entries ; of cattle, bulls, and cows, 298 altogether ; 54 swine ; and 407 sheep. There was a band of music in the field, and I saw the Duke of Athole riding about. After leaving the show ground we went into Dumfries, and took a view of the town. We visited the churchyard in which Burns's monument stands. There are a great many large headstones, but Burns's monument appears to be chief. It is like a little round house, inside of which Burns is represented standing at the plough, and some one, I think, throwing

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a mantle over his shoulders. The church door being open, we looked into the lobby, and saw a monument or two, one (I recollect) was to appearance that of a child. It took us about three-and-a-half hours to go to Dumfries in the morning, but, like a horse returning home, I believe the train brought us a good deal faster home at night.

SONG OF THE SUNSHINE.

What heart could be sad
 On this beautiful day ?
 When all things on earth
 Seem smiling and gay ;
 Warm'd with the glorious sunshine—
 With the bright and glorious sunshine.

Come let us be glad
 On this lovely day,
 When the sweet spring is come,
 And the winter's away ;
 Let us bask in the smiles of the sunshine—
 In the radiant smiles of the sunshine.

It needs not high rank
 To be sharers in this,
 For the wealth of a world
 Could not heighten the bliss
 That a poor heart may feel in the sunshine—
 In the heart cheering glow of the sunshine.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

O ! how cold would earth be
 If the sun were not there ?
 Bringing light, and heat,
 And life everywhere.
 A great earthly blessing is sunshine—
 O ! an exquisite blessing is sunshine.

The sun shines on all lands,
 On men just and unjust ;
 'Tis appointed to do so,
 And therefore it must.
 O ! how good is the Being,
 That bids it to shine,—
 That form'd it at first,—
 Our Creator Divine ;—
 That gives us the glorious sunshine—
 Gives the beautiful seasons of sunshine.

The small birds awaken
 With the sunshine of spring ;
 With their sweet songs of gladness
 The fields and woods ring ;
 Let us sing, too, in glorious sunshine—
 Let us praise the Great Giver of sunshine.

The orphan, all friendless
 And homeless on earth ;
 The sick, and the sad,
 That are strangers to mirth,
 May feel their hearts warm in the sunshine—
 They may feel Heaven's hope in the sunshine.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

They may think of a world,—
 This world above,—
 A land of pure spirits,
 All filled with love ;
 That live in a glorious sunshine—
 And will live in eternal sunshine.

A land where no darkness
 Nor night will be there ;
 No tears of sorrow,
 Nor sighings of care ;
 Where the sun of all suns gives them sunshine—
 Whom they'll praise in eternal sunshine.

Then let us be glad
 On this lovely day,
 When the sweet spring is come,
 And the winter's away ;
 Let us bask in the smiles of the sunshine—
 In the radiant smiles of the sunshine.

For what heart could be sad
 On this beautiful day ?
 When all things on earth
 Seem smiling and gay ;
 Warm'd with the glorious sunshine—
 With the bright and glorious sunshine.

THE SLEEPING YOUTH.

A Parent Gazing on a Son who is Deranged in Mind.

He sleeps, let all be hush'd and still,
 That he may sleep in peace ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Strange fancies that his brain do fill,
 We would that they would cease.

He sleeps, as calmly as a child,
 Upon his mother's knee ;
 Weary with hours of playful sport,
 Wild laughing infant glee.

He sleeps ; mirth, grief, and anxious care
 Alike are overthrown ;
 And love and joy, and hope, and fear
 To him are now unknown.

Praise Him who form'd us as we are,
 Who gives us life and health ;
 Who planteth reason in the soul,
 Gives mind with all its wealth.

His word hath call'd us into life,
 His word can turn us into clay ;
 His word gives reason to control,
 His word can take it quite away.

As vessels in the potter's hand,
 To honour or dishonour made ;
 Like grass or tender flowers we are,
 All wither do, and quickly fade.

Boast not of learning, strength, or wealth,
 They are as talents to us lent ;
 The Giver Great we should adore,
 Such blessings to his creature sent.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

S O N G .

THE HOMES OF MY FATHERS.

One evening I left my birthplace
 And travell'd the forest through,
 But no friend was awake to receive me,
 So I sat 'neath the midnight dew.
 I visited the homes of my fathers,
 But no one of their race was there,
 To welcome a wandering stranger,
 And bid her not yet to despair.
 I drew near to my father's birthplace
 Whilst a shower of rain did fall,
 And was shelter'd awhile from the passing storm
 Beside the farmstead wall.
 I saw the pretty cottages
 Beyond the neighbouring brae ;
 Would my forefathers, many a year
 Long since, oft pass that way ?
 I gazed on a simple spot,
 As their birthplace I did pass ;
 And I wondered who those lilies fair
 First planted in the grass.
 I went into a cottage clad
 With honey-suckle sweet ;
 Would that cottage, half a century since,
 My mother's eyes e'er meet ?
 When out one summer morning,
 A field I chanc'd to pass,
 Where many a lapwing running was
 Upon the dewy grass.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

I wandered down into a vale
 Beside a running stream ;
 Would my fathers ever cross those fields
 Beneath the moonlight's gleam ?

I stood by the aged willow trees,
 Which had braved many a year ;
 And I thought of my great-grandfather ;
 Were they growing when he stood here ?

I passed a gateway cottage,
 Where a stream runs murmuring by ;
 But I saw not the pretty plot of flowers
 That once cheer'd the passer's eye.

I stood on a craggy hill that does
 A noble view command ;
 And in shelter'd spots I saw at the foot
 A house on either hand.

Half ruin'd is the cottage row
 Where my mother first drew her breath ;
 And all that family, save one,
 Lie mouldering now in death.

A flock of cattle cross'd the fields
 Down in the vale below,
 Where my grandmother-great and her daughters
 all
 Once liv'd, long years ago.

In a church I heard an old man preach,
 Where a church once stood before,
 In which a young man on a memorable day
 Did preach sixty years since and more.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

I travell'd on a road o'ergrown with grass,
 That a highway old did seem ;
 And I rested on a hill 'neath the noonday sun,
 As on castle and cot it did gleam.

I stood on a rugged spot 'mongst whins and
 quarries,
 On the evening of a winter day ;
 But the moon and two beautiful stars appearing,
 Warned me 'twas time to come away.

I scanned the stones on a churchyard old,
 Where many a grave is covered with green ;
 Where nearly four and forty years
 A sister's resting place hath been.

I visited the homes of my fathers,
 But no one of their race was there
 To welcome a wandering stranger,
 And bid her not yet to despair.

In the great bustling world they filled a place,
 Once active, young, and fair ;
 But in vain I search to find a trace
 Of them ; where are they now ? ah ! where ?

They are resting now in that lowly bed
 Where all the world must rest,
 That are filling it now, with toil and care,
 In the north, south, east, and west.

To explain the foregoing piece, called "The Homes
 of my Fathers," I may mention the names of the places

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which I visited, and called "The Homes of my Fathers."

I left the Wood altogether on the evening of Wednesday, the 29th of May, 1867. As I was passing on my way to Towerlands, I called at my sister's house in Kilwinning. My sister was not in at the time, but her daughter, Mary Brown, and Isabella Goldie (who were in my sister's house at the time), accompanied me along the road a part of the way. We entered into Eglinton Policies at the first gatehouse. The two girls came with me to what is called the Long Ride, the double gates near Irvine being at the one end of it, and the Stane castle gates at the other end. They left me at the end near Irvine, and turned back to Kilwinning, and I had to pursue my way alone. With the gloom of the trees, and the lateness of the hour, it was by this time nearly as dark as a summer night will be. After walking on that long path with trees on every side, I at last reached the Stane castle gates, and came out on the country road, and arrived at Towerlands just after they had all gone to bed. I knocked at the door, but no one appeared to have heard me, as none but Annie Brown, their girl, was sleeping in the kitchen, at the door of which I knocked. Seeing that they were gone to bed, I did not like to disturb them any further that night, as I feared they might think that I had come at an unseasonable hour; so I went up to an open boiler-house to see what accommodation I could get there. I had been accustomed to sit up many a night in the spring time with cows (when necessary to do so), so it appeared to me to be a small matter to sit up all night

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now ; but the greatest difficulty was to get a seat to sit down on. I groped and looked around in the faint light, and at last found a place to lay some clothes that I was carrying, which I had felt growing heavy long ere I reached the house. The boilers in the boiler-house were steaming away a long time, but I saw no fire, neither could I discover any proper place to sit down. I sat on the edge of a trough sometime, but there appeared to be dirty water in it, and I was afraid that my good cloak would be wetted and soiled in it before I was aware, so I went out to a gate that goes into the stackyard, at the side of which (behind the hedge) there was a heap of stones, and there I sat down awhile, it being the only clean place I knew of. At last I began to fear that I would catch the cold by being exposed to the night air, and went into the boiler-house again, and after looking all round a second time I found a little luggy, which, by turning the bottom upward, I made to serve as a seat for a time. The hours passed, and at last the boilers ceased to steam, and the boiler-house grew colder ; so I rose and walked to keep myself warm, and then I sat down again, and continued to walk and sit down by turns till the morning. I thought to myself how comfortable a bed of clean straw itself must be to a poor wanderer or beggar who has no home or bed of their own to lie down on when they are weary, and scarcely know where to find one. Early in the morning, when light began to dawn, the little birds began to sing in the neighbouring plantations of Bourtreehill with great spirit. At length the hour of rising came, and on one

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of my nephews coming out he was struck with surprise at seeing me so early in the morning, not thinking, till I told him, that I had left the Wood and come there the night before. That was the way in which I spent the first night after bidding farewell to my birthplace—my father's house—(where I had spent so many years) without a home, without a bed, without a companion. But it was well that I had health, strength, and spirit left to endure it. After staying a week with my eldest sister at Towerlands, I came to Kilmarnock, on the 6th of June, 1867, and went to stay with a Mrs M'Corkie, Henrietta Street. A letter came to me the following evening inviting me to go to Linnecraig, near Dalry, on Monday, the 10th, to be at the marriage of my niece, Anabella Stevenson, with Bryce Barr, eldest son of Mr William Barr of Bankend. I left Kilmarnock next day and went to Towerlands, and from thence to the wedding on Monday. After staying four nights with my sister in Kilwinning, I went to my sister's house at Fergus-hill, where I remained three weeks. I then came by Towerlands to Kilmarnock, exactly one month after I had left it. I stayed in Kilmarnock with Mrs Dunlop, 18 Wellington Street, till the 24th of August, 1867, when I left it, and came by Towerlands and Fergus-hill to Mosculloch, where I had been desired to go and stay with my niece some time, her husband having fallen into a bad state of health. I was there till he died. A week or two afterwards I left it, and came to Towerlands, where I stayed till the 11th day of December,—my niece, Margaret Howie of Towerlands, was married to Robert Smith of Broomlands whilst I

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was there at that time. On the 11th of December I again came to Kilmarnock, and after staying till the 27th of that month with my sister, Mrs M'Lelland, in 18 East Langlands Street, I came to 5 West Langlands Street, where I am at present staying with a Mrs Paton.

Two days, I think, before going to stay with Mrs M'Corkie (on the 4th, I think of June, 1867), I came up from Towerlands to Kilmarnock to see if I could find out any person who had a bedroom to let, and after looking for one I fixed on going to stay with Mrs M'Corkie, Henrietta Street. I stayed that night with my sister, Mrs M'Lelland, and on the following day I went down again to Towerlands to bring up some things that I needed. I walked down from Kilmarnock on foot, and the day being very fine when I set out, I had a desire to gratify my curiosity by looking on the place where my father was born at Carmelbank (as from the highway it appeared to lie in a pretty spot), and also on Hallbarns where his father and forefathers were born and had lived many years; so I made up my mind to go that day and get a glimpse of both of the places. I left the main road at Crosshouse, as I had been directed to do, and passed some men who appeared to be cutting a road or something of that kind. As I went to Carmelbank it came on a shower of rain. I went in by the end of the house, and stood there till the storm was past. To make myself sure if it was Carmelbank, I knocked at the byre door where I was standing, and on a woman coming to the door, who I thought was the mistress, I asked her what they called the

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place. She said it was Carmelbank ; she told me that the farm belonged to Overton. I did not know her, neither did she know me. She invited me to go in, but I went on my way as the rain had abated. On going to a high part of the road beyond the house, where there was a heap of stones, I tarried a little, both to rest and enjoy the prospect around. As I went on again I passed a row of pretty cottages, which (as I went forward) I took to be a gentleman's house with a pretty garden in front. But on an old woman coming out, I asked at her the name of the place, and she told me that it was Pollock of the Craig's cottages for his workmen. They are, I think, the prettiest cottages and gardens for workmen that I have passed anywhere. (There is also a nice row called Peace and and Plenty, which we pass when going to Treesbanks gates on the Ayr road.) I passed the gatehouse at Craig, and at length came to Hallbarns. As I went forward to it, I looked over the hedge at the end of the house and saw some lillies growing amongst the grass : Whose hand was it that first planted lillies there ? Perhaps there was no one about the house that could have told me though I had asked. I knocked at the door of the long plain building, and a woman came to the door ; I asked her if she would give me a drink of water, which she did. On making inquiry she told me that they called the house Hallbarns ; she told me the name of the man who had the farm was Howit, I think. She knew me not, but as a traveller who was thirsty and appeared to be ignorant about the road and houses there, I went on and reached the main road at Thornton,

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and from thence I went to Towerlands. That was the first visit that I made to the Homes of my Fathers.

Whilst staying at Kilmarnock I passed Knockinlaw, a farm where my father and mother lived after they were married, and where nine of my brothers and sisters were born, and where one of my sisters died. I went in from the Glasgow road, and after passing Knockinlaw farm house, where Clelland now is (but where my father and mother lived from 1807 to 1825). Before coming on to the Kilmaurs road I came to a little cottage called Knockinlaw Cottage. It had a pleasant appearance, being clad with fragrant honey-suckle—it seemed to me, on that sunny morning, to be a spot of quietness and beauty. Mrs Walker (as she afterwards told me her name was) was at the door in front of the house. As I was going to pass the house, though I was a stranger to her, she handed me a rose, and invited me to go in and rest a little. I went in a short time. She said she had lived there twenty years, but I do not know when the house was built.

I saw the little Onthank which my father had along with Knockinlaw. The tack of Wardlaw ending in 1801, and the tack of Onthank commencing then, my father and aunt Margaret must, I think, have been living there till 1805, when the tack of Knockinlaw commenced, where he afterwards lived. As I went toward Onthank, to get a nearer view of the place I passed a grass field where there was a great many lapwings, or what we call peaseweeps, sitting or running in the bright sunshine of that summer morning.

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On the New Year's day of 1863, I passed the farm of Wardlaw, near Kilmarnock, into which my grandfather, William Stevenson, entered in 1783, and where (I have reason to believe) he died ; and most likely my grandmother either died before my father left it, or else not long after they went to Onthank. The afternoon was far advanced—all appeared to be quiet about the house. I went past it to see where the road would lead to ; it took me into a field, over which there appeared to be a road, which I kept by till it brought me down into a Holm by the side of the water ; but by that time it was nearly dark, so I hastily retraced my steps and returned to Kilmarnock.

In December, 1868, I went in near to the farm house of Struthers, near Kilmarnock, where my great-grandfather (John Galt) and my great-grandmother (Helen Young) lived before going to the farm of Harelaw. I saw two or three large willow trees growing by the side of the road near to the house. I could not help wondering if they would be growing when my great-grandfather and great-grandmother were living there. How many years does a tree take to grow so large ? It will, I think, be about half a century nearly since my great-grandmother died, and she lived till she was above ninety years of age. Her eldest sister was married to — Currie, in the farm of Gree, near Fenwick. I have heard my aunt (Mrs Brown) say that my great-grandfather (John Galt) was offered a lease of the farm of Struthers if he chose, which would last as long as woods grew and waters ran, for five shillings per acre ; but of so little value

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was land in these days that he durst not accept the offer. An old woman named Mrs Rankine told my aunt that when a young girl she was a companion of my great-grandmother, Helen Young. She said she was counted the brawest lass in Fenwick parish, to which she belonged. She said her father's close was sometimes filled with riders wanting her to go with them to the fairs, as was the custom in those days. My great-grandfather, John Galt, was older than her; he was reckoned a real fine man. He died whilst in the farm of Harelaw, at the foot of Craigie Hill. His only son, John Galt, was in the farm afterwards. My great-grandmother in her old age went to live sometime in Riccarton. Afterwards, when too old to live in a house alone, she was taken by turn from one daughter's house to another to live. She died, I believe at Inchgotrick farm house, where her daughter, Agnes (who was married to Andrew Calderwood), was living. Another of her daughters was married to his brother, William Calderwood, who was in the farm of Dirkyett, near Symington I think. I have heard that his son, Andrew Calderwood, is now in the farm of Borland, in Craigie Parish. Another of my great-grandmother's daughters was married to — Manson, farmer, in Millans, near Galston I think. Another daughter was married to John Rankine, farmer, in Wardneuck, near Kilmarnock. David, his youngest son, who was left in the farm, is now in the farm of Goatfoot I think. Another daughter was married to a man called Hamilton; he was a mason, and lived at Parkneuk at the foot of Craigie Hill, where my grand-

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father (John Johnstone) also lived, who was married to her favourite daughter—Mary. I think there is none of the family which Hamilton had now living, at least in Scotland ; a son went to America long since, but I do not know whether he is living or not. My great-grandmother's only son, John, who was left in the farm of Harelaw, was married to the eldest daughter of a farmer called Knox, who was in the farm of Fencedyke in the parish of Mauchline. He had a family, but I have heard little about them. One was sometime in a place called Blacksink ; one daughter was married to a man called Fulton ; and one to a man called Howit, I heard it said ; and one to the son of a Caprington factor, I think, whose name I did not hear. When he left Harelaw he went to a place near King's Well I think. He is now dead.

On the 20th of January, 1868, I went out as far as Craigie, and before going forward to the village of Craigie, I went up to the top of the hill. In a little corner, at the foot of the hill, by the side of the road from Kilmarnock to Craigie, stands a little old cottage (part of a row which is now in ruins) called Parkneuk. At this place my grandfather (John Johnstone) and Mary Galt (my grandmother) lived ; and there all their family, my aunt (Mrs Brown) thinks, was born. My mother was born there in November, 1788. My grandfather was a master wright, and also a mason ; as also my great-grandfather and his son, Robert Johnstone, were architects and master wrights. They lived at a place called the Commonhead of Riccarton. My grandfather had a sister married to a man called

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Wallace, who was farmer in Woodhead, on the water of Ayr. He had another sister married on a man named Macauly; one of his sons was a soldier, who, one day when climbing up somewhere at Dumbarton Castle, fell down and was killed. Macauly also had a son who went to America and bought a farm. He fell from the top of the house and was killed also. A sister of theirs was married to a man called Dreghorn, who went out to America.

My grandmother, Mary Galt, died at Parkneuk shortly after the birth of her youngest child, who is the only one now living—my aunt, Mrs Brown. My mother, who was about ten years old when my grandmother died, kept her father's house sometime. Her eldest sister, Helen, was married to John Paton, son of — Paton, farmer, in the Townend of Riccarton farm. She had two sons and six daughters; the eldest, who I have heard follows after the engineering business, if I mistake not, is now in England; his brother, Mr Robt. Paton, is a seed merchant in Kilmarnock; the eldest sister is married to a man called Orr, a wright in Glasgow; the second daughter who was married to a man in England, whose name I do not know; and also the third daughter, who was married to an Independent minister called Chisholm, are both dead. Other two I think are married (one of them the second time, I think, as her first husband died), but what their husbands names or employments are I do not know. One daughter, for aught that I have heard is unmarried. It is now a number of years since my uncle-in-law, John Paton, died; and my aunt, Helen, was dead a

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number of years before him.

My mother's eldest brother, John, was brought up with his grandfather and uncle at Harelaw. At length he was married to his uncle's (John Galt's) wife's youngest sister (Elizabeth Knox), daughter of Mr Knox, farmer, in Fencedyke, in the parish of Mauchline. I do not know all the different places or employments at which he has been during his life time, but I have heard my aunt say that he was at one time eight years overseer on the farm of Greenhill, near Kilmarnock. He was employed by one of the bailies of the town (Fulton, I think) to straighten and improve the land on that farm. He was, I think, sometime foreman or landsteward to a gentleman. I have heard my aunt say that he had been much respected, and was looked up to for advice, as being a man of wisdom and sagacity. He had only two sons, the eldest went to sea, and the youngest kept a druggist shop; both of them died when young men; and it is now nearly seven years since my uncle, John (himself), died at Kilmarnock, about 80 years of age. I have heard that my aunt-in-law has gone to live at Troon.

My mother's brother, Robert, who was learned under his uncle, (Robert Johnstone,) during his life-time followed after the same business that he had done. He was many years a master wright and architect in Kilmarnock. In his old age he removed with his wife and family to Glasgow, where he died; my aunt-in-law died not long after. His eldest daughter, who was married to a man called Paton, a block-cutter, has been a widow a long time. The second daughter was

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married to a man called Hunter, a cabinet wright in Glasgow. His father was in the farm of Paddocklaw, and his brother is there still. Another daughter was married to a man called Paton, a printer or block-cutter, I think ; another was married to a clerk, about London, called Fulton I think ; but he died a number of years since. Three or four daughters, for aught I have heard, are still living unmarried. They are all, I think, in Glasgow. My uncle's youngest son, James, who is a wright, is also (I think) in Glasgow, married. His eldest son, John, who is an architect, has been a long time in England, in one of the great cities. I think I have heard of his being married now, but I am not sure whether he is or not.

My mother's brother, James (who was never married), in his younger years lived a good deal of his time with his aunt and uncle-in law, Andrew Calderwood, at Inchgotrick. I am not aware of all the places or employments he was about in his life, but I have heard that he stayed sometime with John Baird* who was married to a cousin of his, (gardener at Bellfield). And I also heard my aunt say, that he was foreman sometime at Fardlehill, near Kilmarnock- She said he kept a shop some time for a man called Reid, who was a house painter in Kilmarnock. He is yet living in Glasgow, in the same house in which my cousin, James Brown, is living, as far as I know. When my uncle was keeping the shop in Kilmarnock, he used to criticise the painters' work, and they told him they would like to see himself at it. They either gave him brushes, or else he got them himself, and commenced,

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and they soon saw he could paint. That, I have heard my aunt say, was all the kind of lessons he got in painting. Having a taste for it he commenced to draw the portraits of some of his friends. Robert Paton, his nephew, and some of his sisters ; a likeness or two at the Raws (his cousin's house), I think ; his own likeness, my mother, and my youngest brother (together) ; and my three eldest brothers, my four sisters, and myself were all drawn at Wood ; and also a view of Kilwinning from the little Wood. He drew the portraits of one or two persons in Kilmarnock of the name of Lindsay, Mrs Lindsay having nursed one of his sister's (Mrs Brown) sons who was a twin. He also drew the likeness of Dr Brown of Kilwinning and his dogs, and the Reverend Mr Smith and his wife. When I was a young girl I recollect him living at the Wood. Sometime after my eldest brother went to the farm of High Smithstone, my uncle went there also and stayed till his death, which took place in 1862 (about a half year after my mother died.)

I have heard my aunt say that her father belonged to the Relief Church, and I think that my uncle (Jas. Johnstone) as long as he was able, went up once a year to the Communion at Kilmarnock. He was buried in Kilwinning churchyard, beside my father and mother's grave. But no stone tells their resting-place, except one that was standing there when my father was buried ; erected to the memory of a man called Swan and his wife (Margaret Howie), I think, in whose place of burying my father was laid, for want of room in the

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churchyard at the time I suppose, though it has been enlarged since.

Some years before my mother was married, she went to live with some of her relations; she was, I think, some time at Hairlaw, and some time with her aunt at Wardneuk. I have heard that when she was married, at the early age of nineteen, her brows were made at her aunt's house at Millans. I have heard my mother say that when she was married, the Reverend Mr M'Kinlay of Kilmarnock, who married them, paid my father and her a compliment by telling her that they were the brawest pair he had ever married.

Some years after the death of my grandmother, Mary Galt (who, I have heard my aunt say, was looked upon as her mother's favourite daughter), my grandfather, John Johnstone, again married a farmer's daughter called Weir. Her father was in a large farm called Footum, in the parish of Craigie; her brother was in the farm of Titwood. My grandfather being both a mason and a wright, built (about that time) the little cottage at Treesbank gates, on the roadside as we go to Craigie, and made a nice little flower garden; and there he came to live after he was married the second time, and there he died, I believe. I heard my aunt say, that some time after the death of my grandfather her stepmother went to live at the Treesbanks gatehouse, that stands near the side of the Ayr road. My mother's youngest sister, Mrs Brown, when a young woman lived, I think, some time with some of her relations. She was a number of years with my father and mother when they were in the farm of Knockinlaw.

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My aunt says she remembers when living at Knockin-law, of reaping (or shearing as it is called in Scotch) wheat or corn in fields which my father had at the time, on which Langlands and other Streets are now built. There was one house about the place called Miss Peggy's. Mr Morton was then building the Observatory in one of the fields in which they were reaping. She remembers them going into the Observatory to get a shock ; and a man taking in a frog to get a shock also (most likely it was a shock of electricity). My aunt was afterwards five years with Mrs Morton in the Big Onthank. John Brown, to whom she was afterwards married, was there at that time. He was with Mrs Morton, in the Onthank, seven years. On leaving the Onthank they were married. John Brown's father was a mason ; he lived, I think, in the parish of Craigie. His mother's name was Sophia Greive, she was the daughter of the laird of a farm called Law, in the parish of Craigie. One of John Brown's brothers is in the farm of Horsemuir living, I think ; one of his sisters married in the farm of Camsisken I think ; one brother, I think, was a coachman, but he is now dead. After my aunt and John Brown were married, he went to live at a place called Househall, where he was ploughman and coachman too, I think, to two ladies.

The tilework was started at the Wood in 1839, and shortly after that my aunt and uncle-in-law, John Brown (from Burghhead), came to live at Woodside. He was a moulder of tiles some years, but a year or two before Miss Bowman of Ashgrove died, he went

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into her employment, and was there till she died ; and afterwards my aunt left Kilwinning where they had gone to live two or three years before, and went to live in the little garden at Ashgrove, and John Brown, my uncle-in-law, was in the employment of my eldest brother till the day on which he met with what was the cause of his death. It happened on the afternoon of the 15th of January, 1868, when opposite the railway at Kilwinning Station, the horse which he had the charge of took fright, and plunging violently, when seeing the train and steam-engine running, he was thrown from the cart against a wall, and his head was so severely hurt that he was at once rendered insensible, into Mrs Nairn's house (niece of Mr Reid, the painter, whose shop in Kilmarnock my uncle James once kept), he was carried, and died there ten hours afterwards, my aunt being there (having been sent for when the accident happened.) He was buried on the 20th day of the month, in Kilwinning churchyard, on the very day on which I went to Craigie Hill ; and perhaps, at the very time that I was looking down, for the first time in my life, on the little cottage where my mother and the rest of the family were born, where they had run and played in their childhood, they would be laying in the grave the husband of the only one of the family who was now left ; and, indeed, the only one of either my father or mother's family who was now living in the world. But I was not then aware that my uncle-in-law was dead, and it was some days afterwards ere the news reached me. On going to my aunt's house afterwards, she told me that two

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mornings before the accident happened, her husband smilingly told her that he had dreamed a strange dream. He dreamed he was going to kill himself, and he had to do it. But as they were not in the habit of looking to dreams, she did not inquire into the particulars of the dream. One morning, about the time that I went to Craigie hill, I wakened up just when I was dreaming that a funeral was going to cross the road on which I was walking. I thought I saw it at some distance behind me, just as I happened to turn myself and look back. Can any one tell whether dreams are sometimes sent as warnings or not? My aunt told me that her husband was in the habit of reading through the Bible, and taking the Psalms and Paraphrases, the same way, when at family worship, always commencing where he had left off the previous time. He was at the eighth Paraphrase, and had come to the ninth verse, which he should have sung and the following verses that night if he had been living; but though he did not sing them himself, yet the truths contained in those verses were loudly spoken to all by what happened. Not long after his death my aunt left Ashgrove and went to Kilwinning to live, where she is at present. Her eldest son, Alexander, who was a blacksmith, and went out to America after he had learned his trade, and lived there a number of years, was taken into the army in the time of the American War, and just when about to be dismissed, and when his parents were expecting him to have come home to his native land, he took trouble and died after a short illness. His twin brother, John, is in the employment

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of my nephew at the farm of Law ; James, the youngest son living, is a wright in Glasgow ; Mary, the only daughter, who was a dressmaker, died about ten years ago.

But I must now return to give an account of my visit to Parkneuk and Craigie Hill, on the 20th of January, 1868, with which I commenced this story about my grandfather and his family. At Parkneuk all the little row of houses is in ruins, except the one end. As I passed the chimney was reeking, but no one appeared to be in at the time, the windows were screened, and the door was fastened ; but I saw a boy come out from the manse as I was coming back from Craigie, who told me that he was born at Parkneuk and that his father and mother were living there. I went along a part of the road which leaves the main road at Parkneuk Cottage and leads to the farm-house of Harelaw, where my great-grandfather and great-grandmother (John Galt and Helen Young) lived, and where their family was brought up. It stands at or near the foot of Craigie hill. There appears to be a quarry in the hill, from which stones have been taken. On the top of the hill there are a great many stones lying scattered about, some of them very large and flat. There is a stone dyke round the hill, and also stone dykes round other small hills near to it. From the top of the hill the view is magnificent ; the country around is beautiful ; the fields lying below, with their hedges as distinctly marked out as the lines in a map. Riccarton and part of Kilmarnock is seen in the distance ; the plantations at Treesbanks lying between ;

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and sloping fields, plantations, and farm-houses scattered all over the country; and here and there some gentleman's place of abode, and Parkneuk and Harelaw lying at the foot of the hill. The village of Craigie, which lies beyond the smaller hills, chiefly consists of one row of houses, with two or three, I think, on the other side. The church, which stands near the end of the row, appears to be old-fashioned, small, and plain; its windows were closed. The burying place is beside the church; and the manse at some distance, near the main road. When on the top of Craigie Hill I saw a flock of cattle crossing a field near Harelaw house.

When going to Parkneuk and Craigie Hill I passed the little cottage at Treesbank gates, which my grandfather (John Johnstone) built and lived in after his second marriage, and where he died. I was not disappointed when I saw no appearance of a garden, as my aunt had told me that the last time she passed that way there was none—all the flowers had either been rooted out or had died from neglect.

I went one day to the cottage at Treesbanks gates on the Ayr road, the door was fastened, and shutters were on the windows, as if no person was in. It was there that my grandfather's second wife lived sometime after he died.

On Sabbath, the 26th of January, 1868, I went to the Low Church in Kilmarnock, and heard Mr Hamilton both in the forenoon and afternoon. In the forenoon he lectured in that part of Exodus, which speaks of the birth of Moses, and his being adopted by

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Pharoah's daughter. His text in the afternoon was Psalm 89th and 47th verse—"Remember how short my time is, wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" The 124th Psalm was sung; the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th verses of the 18th Psalm were also sung. On Sabbath, October 18th, 1801, William Stevenson, my father's eldest brother, preached in the Low or Laigh Church of Kilmarnock. It was on that day that the great catastrophe took place, when 29 or 30 persons were killed, owing to a false alarm having been raised that the church was going to fall. He had preached in the forenoon, and it was when the congregation had met for the afternoon sermon that the unfortunate event happened. The church had to be taken down and built anew before another preacher stood in the pulpit or hearers sat in the pews. The sermon my uncle preached that day, was (along with some other writings of his) afterwards taken by his youngest brother to Ireland. In 1857 they were brought back to Scotland by two of his daughters. I have seen a book written by my uncle William, telling of his experiences in his early years, which they also brought over with them. From papers that I have seen at Wood, I believe he died in 1803, or not long after, and was buried in the West-Church, Edinburgh, having been assistant to the Rev. Dr. Black there.

When a little girl I saw at the Wood a printed leaf or two, which appeared to have been part of a book or pamphlet, giving an account of the calamitous event which took place in the Low Church in Kilmarnock—29 persons it said were killed. From a memoir of Dr

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M'Kinlay, by his son, and from an old newspaper which I have seen since I came to Kilmarnock, it is said to have taken place on Sabbath, the 18th of October, 1801. Last summer, whilst staying in 18 Wellington Street, Kilmarnock, an old woman who was living in the house, whose name was Mrs Tannahill, told me that her father-in-law had been killed at the Laigh Church in Kilmarnock, when the great disaster happened in it. She said she was six or seven years of age at that time. She told me that a pamphlet had been published about that time with the names of those who were killed ; also another woman, and a cousin of my mother's, told me that they had seen the pamphlet. In the beginning of this year (1868), one Sabbath day, whilst in the Stevenson Academy Church, Kilmarnock, at the interval, an old man, who lives in Kilmarnock, called Thoburn, came forward and spoke to me. He said he was above ninety years of age ; and that he came to Kilmarnock just about one month before the catastrophe took place in the Low Church. He said they were at their dinner when they heard the alarm about the church. They ran to the churchyard, and it was an awful sight. He told me he knew my father and the rest of the family when they were living near Kilmarnock. He said he reaped corn the first harvest after he came to Kilmarnock, on the farm of Boreland, near Craufurdland ; the farmer's name was Muir and his wife's name was Margaret Stevenson, a relation of my father's. He also told me that there was a relation of my father's in Kilmarnock then, called Thomas Stevenson, who was a schoolmaster. I have heard my

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mother and aunt speak of a cousin of my father's, called Robert Stevenson, who went to the Indies, and his mother, who was a widow, lived in Kilmarnock.

I have heard my aunt speak of a woman, called Elizabeth Smith, living in Kilmarnock, who came sometimes to Knockinlaw when my father was living there. She used to tell her about what happened at the Low Church in Kilmarnock, in 1801. She said that three young women, dressed in white, had come into her mother's house on the Sabbath morning (to wash their feet, I think,) before going to the church to hear my uncle preach that day, but none of them returned alive—they were all killed. One of them was a cousin of my father's; a daughter of John Stevenson of Hallbarns, who appears to be buried in Kilmaurs churchyard from the inscription on a headstone there, telling that she died at the melancholy event that happened in the Low Church in Kilmarnock.

On the 8th day of February, 1868, I went to Thornyhill. I came on to an old road that runs over the hill, the part of it that runs down from the top of the hill towards Busby Castle is over-grown with grass, and was wet, as if a spring of water was running down from the summit. On the other side of the hill, the road, though not overgrown with grass, was running with water like the other. I came down by Kirkland, and reached the main road from Dreghorn to Kilmarnock, at the Croft Inn. I thought the old road had perhaps at one time been a public highway over Thornyhill to Busby Castle, Kilmaurs, Kilmarnock, and other places, when the castle was in its

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prime; but now the castle and the highway have grown old together. The farmhouse of Thornyhill stands on the top of the hill, with a plantation behind it. There is a fine view of the country around from the top of the hill.

On leaving the farm of Knockinlaw at the May term of 1825, my father came to the Thornyhill, and lived there till the November term of that year, when he came to the Wood Farm, near Kilwinning. None of my brothers or sisters were born at Thornyhill; but my sister Jane was born five months after leaving it. On the 5th day of February, 1868, I went up by old Inchgotrick, where miners or cottars of some kind appear now to be living. I then turned back to the main road, and from thence I went up near to the present farm-steading of Inchgotrick. I stood on a rising ground near a little house and saw the farmhouse at a short distance. It was in the farm of Inchgotrick that my mother's aunt (Agnes) and her husband (Andrew Calderwood) lived. My aunt, Mrs Brown, told me, since then, that they first lived in old Inchgotrick, which was the farm-steading then, and then they went to live in the new farm-steading, which was built for them. They had no family. My great grandmother lived some time at Inchgotrick in her old age, and I was told that she died there, more than ninety years of age. It was there that my uncle James lived a good deal in his younger years. I heard that in their old age my mother's aunt and uncle-in-law left the farm and went to live at a place called La Poota some time before they died. There is a line of old quarries

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running from Inchgotrick to Harelaw, which are not a great way distant from each other.

In writing the names of some of these farms I have mentioned, most likely I am not spelling them aright, as I do not remember seeing some of them in print, and only write them as I hear them spoken.

On the 27th of March, 1868, I went out from Kilmarnock to Kilmaurs. I had been told that my sister Helen, who died at Knockinlaw in 1824 when she was only 6 years of age, was buried in Kilmaurs churchyard, and as I had a desire when I was there, to go and visit her resting-place, I went as I was directed, through an entry into the churchyard, and I looked amongst all the headstones to see if there was any one set up to mark the place where she or any other relation was buried. A great many graves I saw had nothing but the green grass above them. There was no stone to tell the name, age, or place of abode of those who were lying beneath; and some of the stones that had been set up, were so old, and the letters worn out with time and weather, that I found it impossible to know for whom they had been erected. I read all that I could read, but I saw no stone that told of a relation being buried there, except one erected to the memory of my father's uncle, John Stevenson of Hallbarns, who died on the 26th of December, 1825, aged 93 years; and his wife, Agnes Millar, who died on the 12th of June, 1812—the stone was set up by his sons, John Stevenson of Kirkland and his brother in Hallbarns. It also told that Elizabeth their daughter died at the melancholy event which happened

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in the Low Church in Kilmarnock, in 1801. The sons themselves, who had set up the stone, died—John at Kirkland, and his wife and daughter Janet. Hugh died at Hallbarns in 1852 ; their sister Helen in 1849 ; and their brother, Peter Warner Stevenson, the last of the family, in 1862—the year in which my mother died.

 THE FAIRY PARK, AND ANCIENT MOUND.

Where the rillet runs trinkling
 In yon hollow spot,
 The fairies may have danced,
 Though now forgot.
 Lightly scamper'd o'er the green lea ;
 Play'd their wild pranks,
 Where now grows the oak tree.

And the druids this mound,
 For their temple may have rais'd ;
 And set up their altars,
 And heathen gods prais'd.
 And perhaps on those altars,
 Their victims were slain ;
 And the blood of pollution
 Those waters might stain.
 But Christianity came
 With its glorious days—
 Crush'd those barbarous customs
 Superstition did raise.

Light and liberty came
 With a powerful hand ;

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Snapt assunder the chains
 That enslaved our land.
 When war's horrid tumults
 Had ceas'd their loud roar,
 Then did peace like some fair dove
 Alight on our shore.
 On their mountains and valleys.
 Now the peasants may rest ;
 Nor bloodthirsty foemen
 Their slumbers molest.
 By their woods and their streamlets
 Nature's students may stray ;
 No spy or informer
 Ensnaring their way.
 The sheep on their hills
 Undisturbed may rove ;
 And the love cooing wild dove
 Inhabit the grove.

May the throne of Victoria,
 Unshaken remain ;
 Nor strife nor divisions
 Embitter her reign.
 In our land may oppression
 Its sway ne'er resume,
 But the fair tree of freedom
 Still flourish and bloom.

GARDEN OF FLOWERS.

Can I forget thee, garden gay,
 When youth's bright years have fled away ?

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The calm, secluded, peaceful lot
 Was mine, when near thee, flowery spot.

Can I forget these flowers when blown,
 Their fragrance sweet on breezes thrown ?
 Their dress of every shade and hue,
 The lilac, orange, red, and blue.

The holyhock of stately mein,
 The gaudy rose, the garden queen ;
 There beauteous flowers all round her stand,
 Like seraglio of eastern land.

Thou lily fair, sweet modesty
 And innocence, thou dost pourtray
 The greatest king in splendour gay,
 Ne'er had like thee, such rich array.

The simple primrose of the vale,
 That wafts its perfume on the gale ;
 Contented blooms, where nature bade—
 It loves to haunt the silent shade.

No passions wild swell in your breast ;
 No envy, flowers, disturb your rest—
 Ambition, pride, you do not know,
 'Tis beauty's smile adorns your brow.

No jealousy lives in your heart,
 Nor malice with its poison'd dart ;
 You speak to us, though words you've none ;
 You language have—instructive one.

You tell us you live here below,
 Your Maker's glory forth to show ;

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And His great goodness to display,
Thus strewing pleasure on our way.

You tell us of the sun's warm rays,
In which you bask the bright long days ;
How plunderers o'er your bosom tread,
And steal sweet nectar from your head.

You tell us when the sun has fled—
Your cheeks with tears are nightly spread,
Till morn brings back that blazing ray
That dries those dewy tears away.

You tell us life's a fleeting dream,
Swift glides away like moonlight gleam ;
As fragile flower 'neath sudden breeze,
So is frail man by dire disease.

You tell us though we're young and gay,
Like you we soon shall die away—
The sun that sees your leaves decay
Shall see all flesh sink into clay.

Though wild beast's foot may rudely tread,
Or hands ungentle, crush your head,
You never murmur or repine,
But to your fate yourselves resign.

May we from flowers a pattern take—
To smile content whate'er our fate ;
When troubles dark perplex our way,
Heaven's will be done, submissive say.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH IN KILWINNING.

My father's seat is empty now,
 My brother's seat is empty too ;
 Ah ! many a seat is empty here,
 In many a once well-filled pew.

Alas ! my heart begins to ache,
 So melancholy thus to view—
 The havoc sad, that time doth make
 In families, churches, kingdoms too.

And now the year draws to a close ;
 I see the autumn leaves fall sear—
 And flowers and trees in beauty cloth'd
 Will soon in nakedness appear.

A picture this of human life—
 Like summer flowers youth blooms full gay ;
 Life's winter comes with nipping frosts,
 Makes beauty's loveliest charms decay.

 INVITATION TO AMERICA.

Come and hesitate no longer,
 Listen to a friendly call ;
 Warmly now invites you over,
 To this land for once and all.

Come, when hope's bright star is shining,
 When young, and thy affections warm ;
 Ere the damps of care and sorrow
 Have dissolv'd life's flowery charm.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Talk not, talk not of to-morrow,
 Know that dangerous is delay ;
 They that future time would borrow,
 May not have wherewith to pay.

Come to a delightful climate,
 To a pure salubrious air,
 Where scarce a cloud the sky o'ercasting,
 Sullies the bright atmosphere.

Come away to a land that's spacious !
 Here is room enough to dwell—
 No o'ercrowded population
 Bringing famine's sickening yell.

Come away to a land of freedom,
 Here no tyrants sit on thrones
 With oppression's iron sceptre,
 Wringing from their people groans.

Come away to a land of valour,
 Here are gallant men and brave—
 Rather than tarnish their country's glory,
 They would choose a bloody grave.

Come away to a land of industry—
 Here no vagrants idly rove ;
 Nor lawless hordes of wild banditti,
 In ambush the traveller rob.

Come away to a land of life—
 Here flocks of wild buffalo stroll ;
 Bands of horses herd together,
 Ne'er did hand of man control.

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Come away to a land of plenty,
 Here fertility doth reign ;
 Raising with unceasing bounty,
 Heaps of every useful grain.

Of every size, and shape, and colour,
 Fruits in rich abundance hang,
 Of most sweet, delicious flavour,
 As may please the heart of man.

Come away to a land of beauty,
 O'er prairies stretching far and wide ;
 Flowers of every hue and colour
 Bloom profuse on every side.

Come away to a land of music—
 Songsters here in every grove ;
 Charming with their melody
 All that in their precincts rove.

Come away to a land of grandeur,
 Rivers here majestic roll,
 With such volumes vast of water,
 Strike amazement to the soul.

Here thou'lt see the cateract tumbling
 From its rocky, rugged bed,
 Till the spray in clouds uprising,
 Falls in showers upon thy head.

Here the vast and boundless forests
 With perpetual verdure charms ;
 Trees with trunks, huge and enormous,
 Twine and lock their bulky arms.

HOMELY MUBINGS.

Here thou'lt see gigantic mountains
 Rearing towards heaven their head ;
 On whose lofty towering summits
 Everlasting snows are spread.

Come away to a land of silence,
 Sweet domain of solitude ;
 Ne'er unpleasing is retirement
 To a child of thinking mood.

Here thou may'st sit, and muse, and ponder,
 Past with present things compare,
 Till thy bosom's calm and placid,
 Tranquil as the balmy air.

Come then, hesitate no longer,
 Listen to a friendly call ;
 Sincerely now invites you over,
 To this land, for once and all.

Thou may'st think I've been a dreaming,
 Or have been in fairies land,
 Or with other eyes been seeing,
 Bound by spell, or witching charm.

True, that land I've been extolling
 Beneath my eyes, yet never fell ;
 But if history's worth believing,
 Nothing but the truth I tell.

 THE OLD MAID'S ADVICE.

They are all gone away, to the young and the gay,
 To those that are lovely and fair ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

They have left me alone amidst pity and scorn,
 Just to break this poor heart in despair.

In the bright days of youth, when each fond word
 seems truth,

And the mind's yet unruff'd by care,
 A girl seldom thinks, as sweet flattery she drinks,
 How time will her beauty impair.

She will look with disdain, on some pining swain,
 Fain the love of her bosom would share ;
 Turn coldly away, or scornfully say,
 For you men, I ne'er mean to care.

But when time's trying hand from his eyes casts
 the band,

Her with others he would not compare ;
 Then she'd gladly say come, but with her he has
 done ;

Will he ever return to her ? ne'er.

A lesson I'll give, as long as I live,
 To all girls who will patiently hear ;
 Let not the conceit of being pretty and neat,
 Haughty pride in your bosom uprear.

Be courteous and bland to every civil man
 Whatever he be, grave or gay ;
 Be he rich or be poor, his attentions endure,
 Nor saucy contempt e'er betray.

His goodwill you will gain if no love you can claim,
 Esteem that still lasting will be,
 When beauty's bright gleam, love's luxuriant dream,
 At time's icy touch flies away.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

DONALD M'DONALD, OR MY SWEET HIGHLAND HOME.

With grave sober step an aged man enter'd,
 His cheeks flushing red as the roses new blown ;
 It was Donald M'Donald, for pity was craving,
 He was straying afar from his sweet Highland
 home.

I saw at a glance he was no common beggar,
 He seemed as if he had better days known ;
 It was some sad mischance thus had caused him to
 wander

Away from the vale of his sweet Highland home.
 With his staff in his hand, and his locks nearly silver,
 He look'd like a pilgrim of ages bygone ;
 He said from his youth he had liv'd as a shepherd,
 Till driven away from his sweet Highland home.
 The cattle and lands once possess'd by a hundred,
 One man now ambitiously grasps as his own ;
 Nor thinks of the hearts he is breaking asunder,
 Chasing families away from their sweet Highland
 home.

Could they not have liv'd with their friends in the
 Lowlands ?

What spirit of evil could tempt them to roam ?
 Thus bringing such grief and distress to our moun-
 tains,

Where we once liv'd so glad in our sweet High-
 land home.

The cots where our forefathers dwelt are forsaken—
 Ah, Katrine ! my wife, I am glad she is gone ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Poor woman, her heart it would really have broken,
 To leave her own land and her sweet Highland
 home.

Ah, little she thought that her Donald she loved
 Would e'er come to this, when his head grey had
 grown ;
 And deserted be the spots where her children once
 played
 Round their fond, happy mother, near her sweet
 Highland home.

And where is my clan ? like a band of kind brothers,
 As birds scar'd from their nests, away they are
 flown ;
 Flown over the ocean, it's broad dashing waters,
 Far from the retreats of their sweet Highland
 home.

My sons and my daughters alone they have left me ;
 As shepherds away to Australia they're gone ;
 When they're quietly settled they'll send for their
 father,
 Now straying afar from his sweet Highland home.

But though in Australia the gold may be gather'd
 And plenty around us profusely be strewn ;
 Oh ! I never shall feel the content in my bosom
 I've felt 'mongst the hills of my sweet Highland
 home.

I like not the hurry and bustle of cities,
 But there's something that's grand and pleasingly
 lone,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

To wander aloft on the bleak rugged mountains
That shelter the vale of my sweet Highland home.

When bowing with age, my strength all departing,
Quite feeble those limbs, once so brawny and
strong ;

My wandering fancy, shall oft be returning
To the land of my birth and my sweet Highland
home.

O bring me the pipe and the reed of the mountain
I took such delight in, in days long ago ;
And breath some wild strain that will echo my
feelings,
So sad, as I think of my sweet Highland home.

 THE PROPHETESS, OR SEER OF VISIONS.

My work I quietly pursued alone,
My brother and the servants all
Had to a haystack gone.

A tallish, middle-aged woman to the doorway came,
Attired in a homely dress, both clean and plain.
A drink of water most respectfully she begged,
And liberty to sit a little by my side,
For she was weary travelling in the wind,
But little used to journeys of the kind.

With a drink of whey, my hands did her supply.
A tear of gratitude came starting to each eye ;
Feelings of sympathy came stealing o'er my soul ;
Tears from my eyes, and quivering from my voice,
I scarcely could control.

She sat down on the ground, outside the door,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

I brought a stool, and placed it on the floor—
 “Come in and sit down here,” then her I bade.
 “Ah, you’re too kind,” with faltering voice she
 said.

Then with the whey, some bread her repast made,
 Which a kind lady her that morning gave,
 And promised her work to give,
 If she in health to the ensuing week should live.
 From whence she came I duly asked her.
 She said, “Had things been as they ought
 I need not have been here ;
 For I have come a long, a long way hence—
 I’ve come two hundred miles,
 Away from Inverness.

A husband and three darling sons
 Behind me I have left,
 Who, for their mother’s absence, will
 Most sorely be distress’d.
 But when the voice of duty
 Did call me thence away,
 No tie of love, or tie of home
 Could longer make me stay.”

“Then what hath made you thus
 So far from home to stray?”
 “Ah, dear ! if I should tell you what
 Hath brought me thus so far away,
 You’d not believe me, or that I was mad,
 Or foolish you would say,
 And I am neither of the two this day.
 I’m one that’s gifted with a sight,
 That none in Britain has beside ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Visions I see, and voices too, I hear
 Speaking to me, as if behind my ear.
 I pray'd, and pray'd that I might have a sign.
 'Twas no delusion strange, a working in my mind,
 That still those visions I should see, those voices
 hear,
 Speaking quite audibly as if behind mine ear—
 Warning of troubles and distresses great,
 Ready upon our native land
 Of Scotland forth to break.”
 One of the visions she had seen,
 To me she forthwith told,
 But there was no interpreter,
 The meaning to unfold.
 “She said she saw a gentleman,
 Lift from a water side,
 And place on a bench—a great large book,
 And it was opened wide.
 Fain would she have known what was said in the
 book,
 But obscurely 'twas written in old copperplate.
 But soon in her ears she heard a sound,
 Speaking words in the eleventh of Daniel found ;
 Then out of the middle of the book,
 A giant warrior upsprang ;
 And then standing up behind the bench
 She saw a nobleman,
 And from letters printed on his breast,
 She read ‘ Lord Eglinton.’
 Lord Eglinton endeavoured
 To keep the warrior down,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

But where he seemed buried,
 Something moved on the ground ;
 And in a little space of time
 It was spread all round and round.*
 Then out of the middle of the book
 She saw another man upstand,
 And she plainly saw a vessel of blood,
 He was holding in his hand.
 Then out of the middle of the book
 Uprose an eight-day clock ;
 She heard the work move slowly round,
 Distinctly every stroke.
 Then she saw them take out a great large wheel
 From the clock, as they turn'd it o'er,
 And then it flew round with five times the speed
 That it had done before."
 Another vision she had seen,
 To me she did describe.
 "She said she saw upon a bench
 Ladies kneeling round and round ;
 And likewise a band of soldiers she saw
 Those suppliants surround ;
 And there they pleaded hard for life,
 But the soldiers would not spare,
 But most mercilessly hew'd them down,
 Though beautiful and fair.
 When five short years have fled away,
 Eight churches then alone will stand,

*This part of her story reminds me of the warrior spirit of rebellion which has secretly been spreading around under the name of Fenianism.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

As monuments that Presbytery
 Was once the form of worship in the land.
 Two years at farthest, and then the enemy will
 light
 Upon our shores at the dead hour of night.
 All thoughtless of danger, will be lull'd in
 slumber's sweet,
 Nor wake till entering death's eternal sleep."
 And then of Peden's prophecies she spoke :
 "How one might travel for a day
 Nor see a chimney smoke.
 Such desolation o'er the land would then be spread,
 One could not walk without seeing heaps of dead."
 "What enemy is this that you forshow,
 Will make the blood of Scotland's children thus
 to flow?
 Is it the Russian, with whom at war they've been?"
 "Ah, no! 'tis one could give a Judas kiss unto
 our Queen,
 In outward show as mild and gentle as the lamb,
 But at the heart a ravening wolf, intent on harm.
 Ah Britain! was it well for thee
 To join in league with one—
 Thy church's enemy?
 Were not the Israelites of old chastis'd
 For mingling with the heathen and uncircumcis'd?
 Does Britain think unpunish'd to escape,
 Her light and knowledge far more excellent and
 great."
 Then she spoke of a comet that had been seen,
 Last seen above Jerusalem,

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Portending to that guilty race
 That wickedly had slain the Lord of grace,
 The utter ruin and destruction of that place ;
 Leaving the traveller no trace
 Of where it's former site had been.
 Then she spoke of one, who for three years then,
 Went round and round the wall ;
 Who with ceaseless voice, both day and night,
 Woe to Jerusalem did call ;
 Then woe to me, and on his head
 A weighty stone did fall.
 To me she seemed as if to say,
 To Scotland she was such as he was then,
 Fortelling of as sad a day
 Almost as that which fell on them.
 Then she told how Peden did forshew,
 How a poor thing from sea to sea might go,
 Seeking a minister to whom
 Her mind she might disclose.
 " I am that poor thing you may see,
 I've travel'd from the east
 Unto the western sea,
 To warn the ministers, my message it hath been,
 To bring that message this long journey I have
 come,
 Beneath the summer's scorching sun.
 But my visits did not welcome seem,
 Me, an imposter, all of them did deem.
 They had no time to speak to me, they sent to say,
 Bidding me come another day."
 More she did say than I have told

HOMELY MUSINGS.

(Though her appearance was not impudent or bold),

But all her words were such as these,
 She was no flattering fortuneteller come to please,
 But like some of the hated prophets liv'd of old,
 Who to the Israelites their punishments foretold ;
 Nor for their faithful warning sought
 Their silver or their gold.

“ Pray, girl, pray,” she said to me,
 “ The devil will seek to hinder you,
 But persevere and you will certainly get through.
 Prayer will be sweet when 'tis continued in,
 Though all be dark and sad without,
 Comfort and peace will reign within.”
 And when she parted, then my hand she shook,
 Casting on me a pleasant look,
 She bade farewell.

This is no fiction that I tell,
 Were all her prophecies but half as true
 As is this tale I've told to you,
 Then we had need to be upon our guard,
 If the sad stroke of this calamity
 We possibly may blunt or ward.
 Then we had need in earnest for to pray
 That we be ready for this evil day,
 Come soon or late, when'er it may.
 Ah Scotland ! it were well for thee
 If a false prophetess this woman be ;
 And false she'll be, if 'tis as many say,
 How the time of visions and of prophecies
 Long since have passed away ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

But great disasters soon enough may come,
Without a prophetess fortelling them.

SONG OF THE TREES.

Beautiful trees ! beautiful trees !

I admire their gorgeous dress ;
Making hills and vales, wherever they grow,
A scene of loveliness.

Graceful trees ! graceful trees !

I admire the gentle air
Of each waving branch, when the breeze makes it
dance,
Or at rest when no breath is there.

Majestic trees ! majestic trees !

I admire their stately form ;
Above all plants that hath boughs and leaves,
They reign in the realm of storm.

Brave trees ! brave trees ! I admire their strength,

When the scowling blasts they withstand ;
Nobly they stretch out their arms to the winds,
And meet them on every hand.

Delightful trees ! delightful trees !

I admire their pleasant shade ;
Form storm and heat the cattle seek
Their grateful sheltering aid.

Useful trees ! useful trees !

I admire their real worth ;
They adorn and protect both the palace and cot,
And make ships to sail round the whole earth.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

Ancient trees ? ancient trees

I admire them for years they have seen ;
 Many men and beasts have faded away,
 But still they are fresh and green.

Fair flowery trees ! fair flowery trees !

I admire their rich array ;
 And I love the perfume of the fragrant trees—
 Apple blossoms and sweet-smelling bay.

Fruit trees ! fruit trees ! I admire the load

Of luxuries in Autumn they bear.
 The cherry, the plum, and the pretty peach,
 The fair orange and sweet-tasted pear.

Trees of all kinds, both high and low,

I admire you one and all,
 From the aged oak, the forest king,
 To the slender tree on the wall.

Who made all the trees of the forest so fair ?

Bids them tower up towards the sky ?
 'Tis a hand above, in kindness and love,
 Both for use and delight to the eye.

 HUSBAND AND WIFE.

That man his father and mother should leave,

And to his wife alone should cleave ;
 The greatest that on earth did live,
 This law of nature forth did give.

No longer twain, but henceforth one,

From hour their wedded life's begun ;

HOMELY MUSINGS.

One in their cares, their joy, and grief ;
 One love at heart there reigning chief.

Who his own flesh did ever hate ?
 But nourish'd it both soon and late ;
 Supply'd its wants with tender care,
 Sooth'd all it's pain, if pain was there.

So he that striketh her to whom he's bound,
 Strikes his ownself ; gives his own heart a wound.
 Think you the blow he will not feel ?
 Aye ! feel he must, except his heart be steel.

Her head what woman doth not love,
 Adorning it all else above ;
 Esteeming it an honour to be beautiful and bright,
 Comely, and fair, in friend or lover's sight.

She who despises him to whom she's wed,
 Despises her ownself, dishonours her own head ;
 Plants in her breast a cruel thorn,
 To lacerate her heart both night and morn.

Husband and wife should ever love as one,
 Through every change, till life itself is done.
 Whoever breaks this Heaven-made tie,
 May break their own heart, and bid to peace,
 good-bye.

 JOY AND GRIEF.

In the sweet time of spring we saw a maiden
 In the freshness of her youth,
 And we spoke to her then of her having a lover,
 And she said not—it was an untruth.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

When the summer came with its glory and its beauty
 The lover and maiden were bridegroom and bride ;
 They were wedded to do to each other their duty,
 Whatever their future of life might betide.

When the autumn came with all its treasures,
 With its luxury of fruit and its rich stores of grain ;
 When the world was busy with its harvest pleasures,
 The young wife nursed her husband in pain.

Ere the winter came with its naked forests,
 Stript of the leaves of green and gold,
 The maiden, bride, young wife was a widow,
 Her husband's bed in the churchyard cold.

O ! think how uncertain are all things on earth,
 How fleeting all pleasures and joys here below ;
 How quickly to sadness oft changed is mirth,
 The shouting of joy to the wailing of woe.

But 'tis well that a Christian contented can die,
 In the prime of his life while yet he is young ;
 E'en ere greyheaded age has had time to draw nigh
 To weaken the power of eye, ear, or tongue.

Yes, tis well that a Christian can die in peace,
 Bid adieu to this world and all things therein,
 When the spirit at last finds a happy release,
 From a body of suffering and sorrow and sin.

'Tis well he can look for a world more bright,
 Where change is forever unknown ;
 And pain, and sorrow, and darkness and night,
 Where they live in love alone.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

WHY IS THIS HEART SO STRANGELY SAD ?

The sun is shining bright above,
 The flowers are blooming sweet to seize,
 The birds sing sweetly in the grove,
 Perfumes are wafted on the breeze.

Why is this heart so strangely sad ?
 And comfortless can find no ease,
 When nature's voice and looks are glad,
 All things seem striving thus to please.

Who formed these longings in the soul ?
 'Twould seem no earthly thing can fill,
 Those yearnings reason can't control,
 Nor bend beneath the sway of will.

Is't that the mind still in pursuit
 Of happiness is vainly bent,
 Still grasping at each shadowy form
 Till heart and energy are spent.

Is there no place where happiness
 May fill the heart without alloy ?
 Nor melancholy cast its gloom
 Over a land of love and joy.

That land, that land, is not on earth,
 For life's a rough and troubled stream ;
 Grief follows at the heels of mirth
 Like phantoms in a midnight dream.

There is a land, of which we read,
 The Christian's hopes do thither soar ;
 He'll taste a joy nought can exceed,
 When planted safe upon that shore.

HOMELY MUSINGS.

THE FAIRY DALE.

Here no wonder the fairies delighted to dwell,
 Undisturb'd in this spot they might revel their
 fill ;

At the foot of the knowe 'tis a sweet little dell,
 And down near the end runs a clear little rill.

But the fairies affrighted, away they are fled,
 Not a fairy save me in this place now is seen ;
 And 'tis sweet here to muse all alone as I tread,
 And gaze with delight on the beautiful scene.

I've thought when the Abbey in yon village* did
 stand,

How the monks they would walk by this soft
 gliding stream ;†

But the monks they were banish'd away from this
 land,

Now like brownies and fairies all a vision they
 seem.

Were we gifted with visions, could see all the past,
 Could we gaze on this place as it ever hath been,
 What a band of the druids, monks, fairies would
 pass,

And the fairies all clad in the brightest of green.

*Kilwinning. †Garnock.





