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The Auld Fowk:

Some Verses in Scots

*By*

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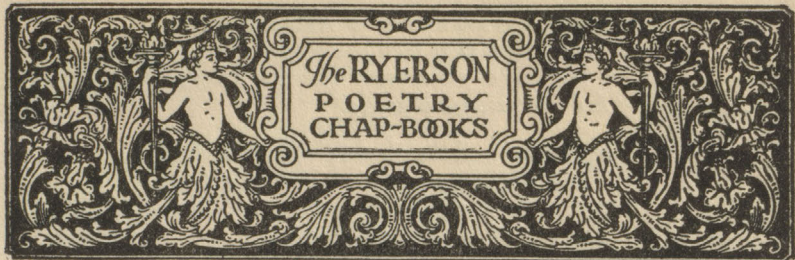


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Mr. McKenzie has had several volumes of verse published. He attended Upper Canada College, and is a graduate of the University of Toronto. He was war correspondent for *The Mail* during the Riel Rebellion in 1885. After completing his course at Knox College, he took a post-graduate year at Auburn Seminary. Later he was instructor in English Literature and Rhetoric at the University of Rochester. In 1896 he began his continuing service with The Christian Science Publishing Society in Boston. His father came from Edinburgh to be minister of a parish in Ramsay, largely settled by Scottish people. Many of these songs recall memories of their way of speaking. Of books previously published, *The Tribune Press*, Cambridge, Mass., issued, 1928, *Heartsease Hymns* and *The Sower* in new editions, and this year (1930) published *Fields of Bloom*.





# The Auld Fowk: Some Verses in Scots

*By William P. McKenzie*

## THE AULD FOWK

**T**HE DEAR auld fowk wha've gane awa',  
Their place kens them nae mair;  
When wi' us I'm sure they'd mony a thocht  
O' wisdom they couldna share.

A wee lad list'nin' tae their talk  
What could I understaun' ?  
But noo I'm thinkin' what wad I gie  
To hae them again near-haun'.

O' the makin' o' buiks there's no an end,  
Said the Preacher in days langsyne;  
Puir students ken hoo dreich they are,  
Wha studies them line upo' line.

But colleges thinks that learnin' comes  
Wi' readin' o' things aince writ—  
I wearied ma een wi' buik upo' buik  
A' empty o' mither-wit.

I minded then o' the auld fowk's tales,  
An' provairbs that cam' wi' a spang,  
Guid-humored sallies an' pawky wit,  
An' the lauchin' that lasted lang.



What profits ma kennin' o' state an' church  
Tradeetions that men hae made,  
An' factions o' prelates an' fechts o' kings,  
An' the tirrorivies o' trade!

Nae learnin' had they but tae read the Buik,  
Their kingdom was a bit fairm,  
But they focht a guid fecht wi' the wilderness  
And won it wi' strength o' airm.

They aye made kindness refreshin' an' free  
Like water frae their deep well,  
Is there colleges teaches a man siccan wey  
About livin' in peace wi' himsel'?



### THE COONTERFIT

**T**HE LADDIE was sent tae the butcher's shop  
Tae get some meat for the table,  
They said he maun come back hippity-hop  
Just as fast as he was able.

Quick frae his oxter they snatched the pack,  
Frae his pooch the siller he cowpit;  
Wi' a gray hauf-croon they hurried him back,  
An' said he maun fairly loup it.

But the butcher was jolly, he never did  
Complain o' the wecht o' a fardel,  
He'd a graund white apron aroond his mid  
Wi' a steel hangin' doon frae the girdel.

He looked at the coonterfit hauf-croon,  
He didna sweer nor yaumer,  
Just reached his haun' tae a shelf aboon  
An' raxed him a nail an' hammer.

Says he, I'll sentence the coonterfit  
Wi' a fate it'll no unravel—  
Wi' the nail tae the counter he fastened it  
Sae it nae mair micht travel.

The lad saw the saft coin wear awa',  
An' sae he made him a riddle:  
What is the cheat that efter a'  
Ends up wi' airn through his middle?



## AULD HOOSE PREFERRED

**I** SAT by the fireside wi' him and wi' her  
Wha baith had seen mair nor fourscore years,  
By reason o' strength may be;  
The sap-wood hissed, wee flames wad birr,  
The smoke puffed oot wi' sudden fleers  
An' I felt its bite in ma e'e.

He telt hoo he cam' tae this new laun'  
Wi' hopes up-strung; he'd been promised a fairm—  
But 'twas naething but rocks an' trees;  
Sae he howked wi' a hoe tae plant wi' his haun',  
An' he felled the woods wi' the micht o' his airm  
An' gied their smoke tae the breeze.

Sune i' the clearin' a cabin was bigged  
O' the trunks o' trees wi' a split-log roof,  
An' chimlay o' wattled clay;  
He'd a byre for a coo, an' a well new-digged,  
An acre sawn, an' coin in his loof,  
An' a lass wha wad say him Yea.

The bairns grew up to ken the soun'  
O' the bitin' axe at war wi' the trees;  
But there cam' a famous year  
When a new hoose had its roof aboon  
Fine walls o' logs, an' for muckle ease  
Stane wa's held the firelicht's cheer.

Their tatties grew fine amang the stanes,  
The winter wheat sent up green leaves  
Frae the ash o' the stumps an' trees;  
Hay frae the swamp they brocht in wains,  
Wi' the flingin' tree they thrashed their sheaves  
An' winnowed the grain i' the breeze.

Syne the young fowk a' had hames o' their ain,  
An' for a surprise they bigged a new hoose  
Tae gie the auld fowk wi' pride—  
Wha couldna but flit, tho' while they were sayin'  
Their thanks, they were sure they wadna be croose  
In a hame wi' nae fireside.



Wee rooms there were wi' walls blank-white,  
An' twa black stoves wi' pipes a' black,  
Not a place at your ease to sit doon.  
They preferred the auld hoose, it wasna their wyte  
Ere winter cam' that they flitted back,  
Not mindin' the smiles o' the toon.

An' he aince mair can sit by the fire,  
An' she aince mair swings her pat on the crane  
An' her bannocks can bake wi' the coals.  
What wise man kens the guid end o' desire—  
He an' she are contentedly leevin' their lane,  
An' maybe they're savin' their souls.



### LEEBY

**Y**E WERE aince a wild tomboy, Leeby,  
Wi' the mischief aye in your een;  
Ye jist loved tae be plaguin' the laddies,  
But yersel' didna care a preen.

I' the schule ye had mony guid lectures  
About no bein' flichty an' prood,  
Comin' oot ye wad aye be lauchin',  
An' gae whiddin' through the crood.

Brave heart, ye're a courageous woman,  
Aince the madcap i' tulzies and tease;  
A surprise ye gied tae Misfortune  
That had ye 'maist doon on your knees.

Ye gied it a whop i' the middle,  
An' then when it scurried awa'  
There ye were, jist as gaylike an' lauchin',  
As if poortith were naething ava.

It's your bairnies that ken ye weel, Leeby,  
Aye, an' Providence too may be glad,  
Kindly carin' for widows dispairin',  
Ane tae find that winna be sad.



## HIGHWAYMEN

A FEARSOME tale o' highwaymen  
Was whispered aboot the toon;  
Ye nicht say there wasna a citizen  
But was shakin' in his shoon.

Here was ma very fine gentleman  
Jist gaun tae the store, nae doot,  
When twa robbers had him, an' didna gie ower  
Till his pooch was turned inside oot.

They spak' him fine words o' courtesie,  
Bade him come wi' them tae share  
In the revelry at the sweetie wife's shop—  
Then left him ootby i' the air.

Then it cam' tae ma very fine gentleman,  
Wha was Gillan, aged three,  
That he hadna his richts, an' had better be aff  
An' complain tae the po'ers that be.

Sae Chairlie an' Struan, the highwaymen,  
Were gruppit an' brocht tae task,  
An' a'body scoldin', an' prophesyin',  
Wi' sic a when questions tae ask.

Struan was jist aboot fower years auld,  
An' Chairlie was gaun on five,  
But the faithers were fain for thrashin' them baith  
Till they'd hae but an inch alive.

Try Moses' way o' consequence,  
Let them wark till the siller's twice earned,  
Said ane wha was wise-like, an' bade them be kind  
Wi' the bairns, till the lesson was learned.

Fair scunnert were they wi' the lang-time wark,  
An' the dreich transgressors' way—  
Ye couldna tempt them wi' crime, the noo,  
They ken aboot double pay!



## MENDER O' THINGS

**D**O YE mind the time we could ca' on the mender o' things?  
Nae king o' a trade through kennin' it weel  
He still was prood, an' wadna be under the thoom  
O' a maister workman whas' heid was toom,  
Wha ca'd for wark a' the same like yarn frae the reel,  
An' was scunnert wi' change ony genius brings.

But the mender wad hae delicht in ony device  
Wad change the humdrum o' wark tae a game,  
Tae be won by a flash o' thocht and ingenious plan;  
'Tis thinkin', he said, that mak's a man,  
Ye canna ever hae man an' machine the same,  
Your factory plan is no richt wise.

When the mender was wi' us we a' felt better oorselves,  
The tribbles that vex he was smoothin' awa';  
He pit his oiled feather into the creakin' locks,  
He effekit smooth rinnin' for a' the clocks  
Wi' an ile himsel' had invented; he'd paper the wa'  
An' pit whaur ye wanted closet shelves.

His crooded shop what a wonderfu' place was it,  
He'd a hand-forge an' anvil wi' hammers and tangs,  
An' a carpenter's bench wi' tools sae neat in a raw;  
He could shairpen jist ony kind o' a saw  
An' ony tool mak' or mend; when awa' he gangs  
He pits the richt tools in his traivelin' kit.

Jist a' sorts o' things for mendin' fowk wad send,  
Tho he likit tae beat oot the siller spunes;  
But best he likit what naebody else could fix,  
Tae be solvin' the puzzle o' your bag o' tricks;  
He gart oor music-box tinkle oot its tunes  
Which nae ither man in the toon could mend.

O' airn an' siller an' lead an' tin an' brass  
He had gadgets an' relics o' every kind;  
He was aye pickin' oddments up for a future need,  
Wha's tae tell how sune 'twill be certifeid,  
Fittin' snug, says he, wi' the plan ye had in mind?  
Ye're wise tae let nae opportunity pass.



## A GIFT IN TIME

WHEN son gied his mither a gowden watch,  
That was a day for a rhyme,  
'Twas oot o' resolvin' frae a wee lad  
That mither desairved the best tae be had  
Hech, sirs, but lang was the time.

He minded her sittin' up straucht i' the kirk,  
Wi' her bonnet sae trim and neat;  
An' her waist sae jimp in her silken goon;  
Jist the bonniest leddy in a' the toon,  
Nane o' the flo'ers mair sweet.

Aince in a while nēw gloves she'd hae;  
He likit the feel o' the kid,  
For she'd gie him a clasp wi' her saft warm haun'  
When he'd sink awa' tae dreamin' laun',  
No daein' as he was bid.

Then she'd gie him the bottle o' smellin' sauts  
Wi' its cap o' siller white,  
Till he'd wauken himsel' wi' the shairp sweet smell  
Tae hear what the minister had tae tell,  
Sae forgettin' wad no be his wyte.

Aff workin' he was far awa' frae hame,  
An' the mither was widowed then,  
Ere the man could fulfil the hope o' the lad—  
Nane the less her heart was gratefu', an' glad  
Ayont what a man could ken.

She keepit the gowd watch lang tae her lips,  
Then 'twas fast wi' a sneck on her chain  
Ere she saw her siller watch slippin' awa'  
In her second lad's haun', an' heard him ca',  
I'll jist hae this for my ain!

An' sae it cam' oot as it micht weel be  
That the gift frae the son tae his mither  
Was a token that fluttered her heart wi' pride,  
And an act o' providence tae provide  
A gift as weel for the brither.



## THE PALE STUDENT

'TWAS a real happy lad gaed oot frae oor hame  
Efter lang hard wark preparin' for college;  
Four years he was thrang wi' the fox-hunt game  
They ca' pursuin' o' knowledge.

He brocht hame a sheepskin he ca'd his degree,  
Giein' Latin names for classes he'd been in,  
I couldna mak' sense when he read aff tae me  
The words o' fine soond without meanin'.

But wi' this B.A. he was no oor ain lad,  
He was cross-grained and fiky an' fu' o' the fidgets  
Aye argufyin' mair po'er tae the bad,  
An makin' up giants o' midgets.

His cheek wasna reid, his e'en didna shine,  
He was deil-possessed wi' some keen ambeetion;  
When I spak o' the faith had lang been mine,  
He ca'd faith in Gude supersteetion.

Whit wey is't he hates the guid word o' his youth,  
And noo has mischancy words in place o't?  
His forefowk united tae fecht for the truth  
And aye their lives showed the grace o't.

Why couldna the college professors agree  
Each ane tae haud back the things he's in doot o'?  
If ye hae tae ken fause gods tae get a degree  
I'd hae mair o' Apollo nor Pluto?

Wad the college professors hae back their degree,  
An' wi' it their teachin' that's been sae unsettlin',  
An' swap back the lad wha used tae be,  
Mony a time I was ettlin'.

Tae catch at professors I wadna dare,  
Tho' muckle they say may be blether o' blindness,  
Why shouldna they a' wi' their wisdom prepare  
A when scholars acquan't wi' kindness?

I'd mak' the pale student a buirdly man,  
An' shoo back his doots tae them that hatched them;  
Tho they think his mither a harridan,  
Gin I save his joy I've matched them.



## JOHN THE ELDER

**A**ULD John the Elder was a teacher guid and grim,  
He gart us "toe the chalk-line on the flure";  
He was doon upon a' slinkin',  
But had hopes tae get us thinkin',  
When he thrashed it meant tae him  
That Providence tae some o' us was dour.

He had a game that gied us thochts o' judgment day,  
He'd herd us in a corner a' tae staun',  
Gie words tae spell or sums tae figure,  
An' wha was quickest on the trigger  
An' a richtlike answer fairst wad say  
Escaped frae 'mang the goats tae his richt haun'.

Tae him the tares an' wheat were different kinds o' fowk  
'Stead o' thochts in a man, the guid anes strivin' for licht,  
An' sae he keepit his black strap handy  
Tae gie every ane o' the goats a pandy,  
Whether timorous lass or silly gowk,  
An' the bold were stirred wi' anger, the timid wi' fricht.

Wha but can weel remember broon-eyed Rab, his lad;  
His faither was afeart tae favor him,  
Sae was severe and ower-compellin';  
Ae day he frichted him into tellin'  
A lee jist foolish rather than bad—  
Ye should hae seen the auld man's face grow grim.

He was gaun tae save the soul o' the lad by punishment;  
The children were still, but for gaspin' o' indrawn breath;  
Then the maister began a frenzy o' thrashin',  
The fear in his heart chilled a' compassion,  
Wi' a blacksmith's airm the blows were sent  
Till the lad fell doon sae limp it lookit like death.

Then awoke the Christian man in the rigid Calvinist,  
'Twas a faither pitying knelt by his bairnie's side:  
What hae I dune tae ye, Rabbie, Rabbie,  
O Rabbie, forgie me, ma wee babbie!  
The children drew even breath, for he kissed  
His laddie, Love wi' its glory had vanquished pride.



## THE TWA BELLS

**A**E KIRK'S white wa's rose frae a grassy level,  
Wi' the manse ower the road stan'in' near;  
Ye could see far awa' its heevin'-pointin' steeple,  
An' the clangor o' its airn bell hear.

The ither kirk they biggit hie upo' a hillock,  
Wi' stane wa's on the leevin' rock;  
About its square tower the doos were aye affichter,  
But there wasna a bell tae ca' the flock.

Ae bell wi' its clangin' ca'd the twa congregations—  
Did the sexton hae a clock? fowk were sayin';  
There is never, said objectors, a set time for the ringin',  
Can we no hae a bell o' oor ain?

Syne they had it a' resolvit, an' set oot tae raise the siller  
Wi' their sociables an' sic like gaein'-ons,  
Tae pit up i' the tower, ahint the shutters swingin',  
A deep-toned, solemn bell o' bronze.

Tae gie or no tae gie—fowk were in a swither,  
Was't worth a' the kickup wha could tell;  
We bairns were sure an' certain, and aft we said tae mither:  
Ye mauna gie up siller for a bell.

Aweel, it a' was paid for, the day afore the ringin',  
An' the auld clockmaker set the time;  
Its deep tones rang wi' a soond a'maist holy,  
Then the ither bell startit wi' its chime.

But when oor bell was quate we couldna start the service  
There still was sic a jangle i' the air—  
The ither bell ring-dingin'; sae was it ilka Sawbath,  
We maun aye wait a few minutes mair.

When the twa bells were clanglin' their ding-dang thro'ither  
We'd ask mither, What about the bell—  
Did she really gie up siller tae bring this clamor on us?  
She'd smile a bit an' say, I winna tell.



## THE BAIRNS ELOPE

**M**A WEE man learned tae walk and rin,  
An' sune he learned tae obsairve—  
Syne he needit a language tae tell o' the states he was in,  
And nane but the richt word wad sairve.

We were doon by a gairden in bloom, ae day,  
Wi' a spinnel yett i' the wa',  
Thro the bars a wee lass peekin'—I left them tae play  
While I gaed on her mither tae ca'.

They walked about silent as twa wee birds,  
She pointed oot what he should see;  
They had nae conversation ava', at least not wi' words—  
*Och her blue een*, said he.

Her mither aince gied the wee bairns a treat,  
Broon sugar on weel-buttered bread,  
But he didna mak' mention o' that, nor ca' the lass sweet;  
*Och the curls of her*, he said.

Ae day he fand a stick wi' a crook  
Exactly like a wee pleugh—  
Aff he set for a fairm tae be ploughed, and the lassie he took  
For a fairm-wife was needed too.

The warld was his as he gaed tae explore  
An' choicely pick oot his fairm,  
Wi' a hoose ready-made that he kenned, he'd seen it afore,  
For the lassie haudin' his airm.

Lang was the way and weary were they  
When the fairmer's wife they see,  
They didna tell o' their ploy for they heard her say,  
"Dis yer mither ken whaur ye be?"

"Sae ye rin awa? There'll be a tae-do,  
But noo, for yer hungry wame,  
I'll gie ye bread and a drap o' mulk frae the coo,  
And oor John wull drive ye hame."

An' was there muckle ado i' the toon?  
The cry "Lost bairns," was about,  
An' people hither and thither gaed roun' and roun'  
Like ants, an' the bells rang oot.



They searched the hooses, the auld sawmill—  
They were oot on the river wi' boats;  
They scoured and scratted the hale o' the toon wi' a will  
Frae Land's End tae John O'Groat's.

An' think o' the mithers imaginin'  
O' Gipsies an' bulls an' rams,  
An' water an' fire an' wild beasts ravenin'—  
They wept for their lost wee lambs.

At nichtfa' the pleugh-horse trudgin' slow  
Brocht baith the wee wanderers hame,  
An' the hale toon sune was lauchin' an' hearts were aglow  
At the wee lad winnin' his fame.

For a' tae read they had it in prent  
About the elopin' affair;  
Nane o' earlier age had the auldest inhabitant kent,  
They were therefore the maist famous pair.



### BACHELOR PETE

**W**HY HASNA Peter been mairrit,  
Why has he no fand a bride?  
He's a lad o' a proper sperit,  
Has he no a proper pride?

At the lassies he's aye been glentin',  
Is he feart o' the ane he micht choose?  
They're canny, but guid at repentin',  
Sayin' Nay disna mean, I refuse.

He's ower muckle gien tae blether,  
Gin a weddin' had come tae pass  
When they dwelt ane and ane taegether  
He'd be wantin' a different lass.

But sae weel known it is, it's been prented,  
"Fowk wed ither fowk than they thocht";  
Mairrit anes maun aye be contented  
Wi' "better or worse" than they socht.

Nae guid is't for man tae be lanely,  
Let him seek for the bonniest prize;  
Let him win, but remember this anely:  
Be ready for ony surprise!



## CARPENTER

I HEARD the fowk ca' the carpenter gifted  
Wha cam' wi' his tools in a box;  
'Twas a wecht as sair gin ye tried tae lift it  
As the kist had been fu' o' rocks.

He plans wi' a pencil an' square graun' hooes  
Wi'oot forgettin' the stairs;  
Fowk aye are for lettin' him dae as he chooses,  
Tae cross him naebody dares.

He cam' tae big a hoose for Prince Charley,  
Wi' a manger for haudin' his hay,  
An' a box for his aits or a pickle barley,  
An' a stall for his bed o' strae.

An' he biggit a fence langside the balsam,  
Wi' twin gates tae keep oot the swine,  
Whaur the cherry-tree stood wi' its fruit sae halesome  
That the Gipsies gathered for wine.

The echoes answered the clap o' the hammerin',  
An' the coughin' soond o' the saw,  
As the carpenter workit wi' Hughie Cameron  
Makin' Charley a hoose an' ha'.

I wonnert hoo he could be sae gifted  
An' had no gien a thing tae me;  
He was mendin' the screen whaur the aits were sifted  
An' I askit hoo that could be.

He telt me he'd been sae muckle taskit  
Wi' no ony time o' his ain,  
Syne for me he fashioned a bonny wee basket  
Oot o' a cherry stane.



## WADDIN' CAKE

THE HOOSE was a' abustle wi' the waddin' tae come on,  
The curious weans in a'body's wey like imps got mony a  
paik,  
Wi' the mistress teary, the helpers sae weary, the sewster sae  
put upon,  
Gey an' glad were they when there cam' the day tae bake the  
waddin' cake.



They washed the currans an' turned them ower tae clear awa'  
Greek sand,

Fat raisins frae the vines o' Spain were gien the weans tae seed,  
They blanched the aumonds that cam' frae France an' philippines  
they fand,

Their ain wheat fields gied bolted flour i' plenty for their need.

They'd candied citron frae Ceylon, lemon an' orange peel,  
Wi' sugar frae the Indies brocht, an' honey frae the skeps,  
An' butter frae their ain kind herd that kenned the bride sae  
weel—

Are ye wantin' aught? then it maun be bocht, the weans'll  
save your steps.

This is required o' a waddin' cake ere it crusts wi' the heat o' the  
fire

That a thimmel, a ring an' a saxpenny bit intil its midst shall  
fa';

The mistress saw tae't, an' ower the crust 'twas frosted for a' tae  
admire,

Wi' sugar-plooms frae the sweetie-wife tae gie it colors brow.

Noo the likeliest catch, an' the richest match will be shown by  
the saxpenny bit,

An' ye may confide she'll be neist bride, the lassie wha gets  
the ring;

Gif a lad gets the thimmel he's fated to hae ower thrifty a wife  
wi' it,

Gif it fa's tae a lass she may be an auld maid—but wha wad  
face sic a thing!

When Jockie's tooth clinked on the saxpenny bit they agreed  
he'd be a rich catch,

When the mistress's neice fand the ring in her piece, the bride  
tae be they cheered;

But fate didna shadow the waddin' guests, free-minded were  
maiden and bach—

They fand nae thimmel; an' what is mair, nae thimmel ever  
appeared.

Some say that Davy picked it oot the piece for Martha Ann;

Ithers that Zilpa let it fa', she couldna think it fair;

Some think they kent for certain that the mistress stayed her  
haun',—

She gied up saxpence, ring an' bride, but her thimmel she  
couldna spare.



## TRIED BY FIRE

**I**N HIS youth he held tae his faith wi' a fiery passion;  
It wasna jist that he felt he maun rin wi' the fashion,  
He had tae believe wi' distinction—  
An' sae wad hate tae extinction  
Whaever was heretic named,  
Wrang-minded anes wha could be blamed,  
Or a' an' sundry wham the deil had claimed.  
He was sure o' a far-awa' court he spak' o' as Heevin,  
Whaur a hantle o' chosen children o' men wad be leevin';  
Efter Judgment Day o' thunder  
They wad hear their ca' wi' wonder,  
But see the lave o' mankind  
The stumblin', the deaf, the dumb an' the blind  
Thrust doon tae the brunstane pit wi' nae hope assigned.  
Unfettled youth may hae pride in its judgin' blindly,  
But age is na blessed if it canna see a' things kindly;  
In affliction's furnace holden  
Oot flowed his life pure golden  
Wi' its message clear as a bell—  
When Gude wi' the sons o' men shall dwell  
An' be their God, nae use there'll be for hell.



## HAPPINESS

**A**INCE ye couldna but stir the stour,  
Thocht the auld fowk unco dour,  
Wanted the hale warld in your po'er,  
Happiness was beyond ye.

Aince I was fain to hae my ain ha',  
Wanted aye muckle an' a' things braw,  
Pride was hie, but it had a laich fa'  
Or happiness wad hae gane by.

Noo havin' peace your joy ye can tell,  
Ane o' the auld fowk ye are yoursel',  
Tastin' o' nectar and hydromel  
Like the wise auld gods o' Homer.

I am ower-rich for wand'rin' desire,  
Rested wi' love I jist canna tire,  
Wi' weans o' ma weans sittin' roond the ha' fire,  
Bonny darlin's they a' are.



Far an' awa' an' weel forgot  
Are a' the sorrows o' oor lot,  
Had we aince griefs we hae them not,  
Happiness is oors noo.

\* \* \*

### OUR LAD'S WIFE

**M**A dawtie's like the rose,  
Fresh wi' the dew o' morn,  
That hauds its heid on hie abune the lave;  
She's like the reid, reid rose  
Wi' beauty newly born,—  
A bonnie lass, and young tae be sae brave.

When grew she up sae tall  
Wi' heid like a rose's flower  
Sae fair abune the green leaves an' the briar?  
Thinkna she's ower tall,—  
Wi' leddy grace for dower  
She'll dae for me, I canna but admire.

Ye've heard a song-bird chime  
As sweet as a siller bell,  
An' the tone hauds on wi' music i' the mind,  
Her voice has jist that chime,  
An' mair nor words can tell  
The tone tae your heart conveys its message kind.

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#### NOTE BY THE WRITER

In his preface to "A Northern Anthology," John Buchan says: "To those accustomed to one dialect only, let me repeat the advice to read aloud." He confesses that the dialect might not now represent spoken language. But there is a language of memory, of the heart. When a former Chap-book, entitled "Bits o' Verse in Scots," was placed in the hands of one unacquainted with the dialect, I asked him to try reading aloud. "Profiting by your suggestion," he says, "I read it freely and naturally and have been astonished at my almost perfect understanding of it." In my young days men used to speak in Scots when they were merry, to tell a good story, when they would give quaint advice to a child, or when there was tenderness to be expressed to one much beloved.



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