

**"CUMMERLAND TALK";  
BEING SHORT TALES AND  
RHYMES IN THE DIALECT OF  
THAT COUNTY. 2ND SERIES**

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"Cummerland talk"; being short tales and rhymes in the dialect of that county. 2nd series by  
John Richardson

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**JOHN RICHARDSON**

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# "CUMMERLAND TALK;"

BEING

SHORT TALES AND RHYMES IN THE  
DIALECT OF THAT COUNTY.

BY

JOHN RICHARDSON,  
OF SAINT JOHN'S.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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P R E F A C E .

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IN publishing this Second Series of Dialect Pieces, the author begs respectfully to inform his readers that the present volume, like the former one, consists of sketches in prose and verse, illustrative of the dialect, as well as of some of the habits and modes of thought which still prevail in all the rural parts of Cumberland. The stories and rhymes introduced are, with one or two exceptions, strictly Cumbrian in character and idiom, the author having taken pains to ascertain that the real incidents related actually happened in that county; while in the few pieces which are purely imaginary, he has been careful to preserve the same characteristics.

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It may perhaps be objected by some critics that the dialect as here written is exaggerated, or, in other words, made broader and more bucolic than it is anywhere spoken at this time of day. That, however, is not so; but, on the contrary, in the more purely pastoral and agricultural parts of the county the vernacular used is very much ruder than anything to be found in this volume. In fact, any one who attempts to write in the dialect will find that if he intends to make his composition in any degree understandable, he will be under the necessity of modifying to some extent the folk-speech which he has heard. One of the greatest impediments in the way of writing the dialect exactly as it is spoken, is the tendency which many of those who speak it have to disregard all the rules of grammar. A single specimen, taken at random, may serve to illustrate this habit. A country man, speaking of his wife and himself going to market, will say, "Hur an' me's gaan." Here we have two pronouns

in the objective case in place of two nominatives, and a singular verb instead of a plural one—three palpable errors in a sentence of five words. Considering, however, such anomalies as nothing more than corruptions and abuses, the omission of which would not in any way affect the expressiveness of what Dr. Gibson lovingly styled “our grand old dialect,” the writer of these pieces has thought himself justified in discarding many of at least the more glaring of such solecisms.

There being no arbitrary rule for spelling dialect words, as might be expected, almost every one who tries it has a method of his own ; and some writers seem to think that if they can only manage to spell every word, dialect and non-dialect, in some outlandish way, that is all that is required. Failing to see the utility of making what is difficult enough at any time, to outsiders, more unreadable still by such a system, the author has in this volume adopted the opposite plan of spelling all ordinary English words



in the usual way, while in spelling dialect words he has followed to a large extent, though not altogether, the phonetic system, as used by the late Dr. Gibson and Mr. Dickinson.

With these few remarks, he offers to the public this second volume of trifles, hoping that it may meet with as cordial a reception as greeted the first, and trusting also that it may afford entertainment and amusement during an idle hour to at least all Cumbrians into whose hands it may chance to fall.

J. R.

SAINT JOHN'S.

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