

NOTES ON SCOTTISH SONG

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Notes on Scottish song by Robert Burns & Robert Riddell & James C. Dick

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ROBERT BURNS & ROBERT RIDDELL & JAMES C. DICK

NOTES ON SCOTTISH SONG

NOTES
ON SCOTTISH SONG
BY ROBERT BURNS

WRITTEN IN AN INTERLEAVED COPY OF
THE SCOTS MUSICAL MUSEUM
WITH ADDITIONS BY ROBERT RIDDELL
AND OTHERS

EDITED BY THE LATE
JAMES C. DICK

HENRY FROWDE
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PREFACE

THE principal part (I) of the following text is a verbatim copy of holograph Notes of Robert Burns in an interleaved copy of the first four volumes of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, which belonged to Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, the friend and neighbour of Burns at Ellisland. Then follow (II) the Notes written by Riddell in the same volumes. The interleaves in the volumes being incomplete, I have described (III) the missing leaves, with the songs which faced them in the volumes, with a copy of three important notes which R. C. Cromek inserted in his *Reliques of Robert Burns*, 1808, as from the hand of Burns. Obviously these cannot be verified. The last part (IV) consists of a series of spurious notes, also printed by Cromek in the *Reliques*. These are not in the volumes, and never were there.

The object of the present small book is simply to correct the misleading statements of Cromek, whose work was received with acclamation, and was so successful that a second edition was printed in 1809. In the year 1813 it was again published as the fifth volume of Currie's *Works of Robert Burns*, and the Notes now referred to, being a considerable and important part of the volume, have remained, and have been accepted as the authentic writing of the poet. Cromek was so enamoured of his success, that he reproduced all the

notes, with many additions, in his *Select Scottish Songs*, 1810. He begins the Preface thus:—‘The following Remarks from the pen of Burns appeared in the publication of *The Reliques*’, which is untrue, for all the additions were written either by himself or by his friend in deception, Allan Cunningham.

The notes in Cromek’s *Reliques* (pp. 195–306) have had a free run of one hundred years. Nearly every published work of the Songs of Burns during that period contains more or less of the notes. Hogg and Motherwell, Cunningham, Chambers, Scott-Douglas, and Henley incorporated them bodily into their editions of the Works of Burns, as none of these editors had seen the *Interleaved Museum*, nor had means to correct them.

While my *Songs of Burns* was going through the press I discovered the volumes with the MS. notes in the possession of Miss Oakshott, of Arundel Square, Barnsbury, London, who had inherited the library of a book collector, A. F. Nichols, for whom she was housekeeper for many years. Nichols had bought them about the year 1871 from Mr. John Salkeld, bookseller, London. He acquired them with other Burns volumes as a job lot, but discovered their value and catalogued the lot at £110. The *Interleaved Museum* was bought at Sotheby’s auction on October 30, 1903, by Mr. Quaritch, Piccadilly, who has since sold them to Mr. George C. Thomas, of Philadelphia, in whose possession they now are.

The previous history of the volumes is briefly this:—After Riddell’s death, in 1794, they passed to Mrs. Riddell, his wife, who removed to Edinburgh. She gave them to Miss Eliza Bayley, of Manchester, her

niece, and while they were in her possession Cromek examined them. How she parted with them, and how they came to London, is not known.

I was permitted by Miss Oakshott, in October, 1902, to take a complete copy of the Notes, with permission to use them, and while in the hands of the auctioneer I corrected my copy with the owner's authority. The printed proofs have been generously revised by the present owner of the volumes, and with his consent and on my responsibility these Notes of Burns are now published as a verbatim copy from the *Interleaved Museum*, with the sole object of putting on record what Burns is really responsible for writing.



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