

**METRICAL MEMORIES OF  
THE LATE WAR  
AND OTHER POEMS.  
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Metrical Memories of the Late War and Other Poems. And Other Poems by James Reed

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**MEMORIES OF THE LATE WAR.**



## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

By way of Preface to the following Volume of Poems, the Publishers have been permitted to quote the substance of the appeal made by Mr BELL in introducing Mr Reed's Compositions at his "Literary Evening," on 27th February, 1861.

"On the 28th of January 1859, Scotland was mourning and rejoicing in a clamour of sobs and cheers, and Scotchmen in every climate of the earth kept sympathetic holiday, while the admirers of genius in every land were gathered in social groups to do honour with the sons of Caledonia to Scotland's greatest Bard—the lowly born,—the heaven-endowed,—the poor, in life,—in death the magnificently honoured—ROBERT BURNS." Mr BELL stated, that at his first "Literary Evening" after the Burns' Festival, he, in the course of his introductory remarks to one of the pieces, expressed a hope "that the sympathies of Scotland in her Bard of Nature, will not have found their only or their chief expression in the social feast, or even in the feast of intellect that so richly accompanied the creature-comforts of banquets and soirees; but that, now when the excitement of Festivals has passed, the practical good sense of the Country will not fail to commemorate the Poet in a more permanent manner, and

Lay this tribute on his shrine—  
Reverence to the *gift* divine  
In humble *living* Bards,—in sign  
Of genuine love to Burns!"

Animated by such sentiments, it was not without emotion that, on the 14th of January in this present year, (Mr Bell told his audience) he had received a letter from a Working-man, that he was sure would awaken sympathy in the breast of every lover of the Peasant Poet, and would, he trusted, "excite to an active recognition, ere it be too late, of a genius that has struggled with hard toil and poverty through the winters of three-score years, and has hitherto been baffled in all attempts to assert its claim to an entrance in the world of letters." His correspondent thus writes :—

"There has been, Sir, a strange incongruity betwixt  
"my every day life and the occupation of the leisure  
"hours that life has afforded. I have been, and am yet,  
"a most inveterate writer of verses, almost all of which  
"have appeared and disappeared with the periodicals in  
"which they were inserted. I believe I have contribu-  
"ted upwards of one hundred pieces to one newspaper  
"alone. Like most poetical dreamers, I do not say I  
"had no ulterior object, for the sustaining hope accom-  
"panied this indulgence of the rhyming propensity, that  
"some fortunate period would arrive, when a collected  
"volume might establish my claim to the name of poet,  
"and, perhaps, draw me from the outer verge of society,  
"where fate had placed me. Any attempts made to  
"realize this fanciful conception proved miserable abor-  
"tions. Every failure served to show me the humiliating  
"truth, that I was, at best, a literary vagrant, who never  
"could obtain a settlement in any Union. I had leapt  
"over the wall, and could not attain the celestial city  
"of poetical fame or reward. Nevertheless, I could not  
"abandon the seductive pursuit, and continued to amuse



“and wile away the leisure time my rugged and hazardous occupation allowed; and, like the insect in the apologue, literally sung my life's summer away into a dreary and desolate unprovided-for winter. I am now sixty-two years of age, broken in health, and unfit to follow my usual dangerous trade; hence my present application to you.”

With this letter were enclosed several pieces which, Mr Bell remarked, “gave evidence, not only of rhyming facility, but of poetic feeling and genius of a high order. I feel,” said Mr Bell, “great satisfaction in being in a position to advance the wishes of my correspondent by a public introduction here, and allowing his Compositions to plead their own merits before an intellectual assemblage like the present—which will not, I am sure, let this gray head go down in sorrow to the grave for lack of sympathy and patronage. The extent of my demand is, that you subscribe for copies of our humble Poet's forthcoming volume, on which he rests his hope of enrolment with the Sons of Song, and which, without an adequate subscription list, he cannot publish, but must die as he has lived, unknown. Oh, hard lot! oh bitter death, to one whose soul, conscious of the seed of immortality, longs for after life! I plead with you by the love you bear to Burns,—by all the memories of his sad fate,—by the living glory of his fame,—by your national pride in his genius;—let not the aspirings of this toil-worn Poet be stifled in his agony of desire for fame!

“It is to me perfectly amazing that a cultivated mind could have been so held down by adverse fate, that its possessor has in old age to depend on the labour of his

hands, in the hazardous occupation of a Journeyman Slater! Let this fact increase your sympathy and your admiration of what has been accomplished under such difficulties of fortune! No doubt the pursuits of literature have been in a great degree their own reward, and a safeguard against the coarser pleasures in which too many working-men abuse their leisure hours, and debase their nature; but, in the name of common sense, let us not only lecture the working-classes on their folly, but encourage them to do better, by fostering those among them who set a good example to their brethren, and by opening wide the pathways to distinction, when honest merit struggles to display the fruits of well-spent time. I trust that every person present, who can afford the amount, will, by subscribing, tell the working classes, that intellectual pursuits, and the self-denial they involve, need but to be known to be honoured and rewarded, wherever they are found."

The result of this appeal was a spontaneous subscription for nearly fifty copies of the volume; and since then, through the kind exertions of Mr Bell, and one or two other Friends, our Author has obtained a considerable number of Subscribers, though not so many as will cover the expense of printing and binding. The Publishers confidently anticipate that the above testimony to the general excellence of the Poems, will be amply borne out by a perusal of the various Pieces in the Volume, and that the result will be, a greatly increased subscription list from all the friends of intellectual effort and sympathizers with humble Genius.

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BY JAMES REED.

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