

**JOHNNY GIBB OF GUSHETNEUK
IN THE PARISH OF PYKETILLIM,
WITH GLIMPSES OF THE PARISH
POLITICS ABOUT A.D. 1843**

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About A.D. 1843 by William Alexander

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WILLIAM ALEXANDER

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OF GUSHETNEUK IN THE

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WITH

Glimpses of the Parish Politics about A.D. 1843

BY

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

AUTHOR OF 'SKETCHES OF LIFE AMONG MY AIN FOLK,'
'NOTES AND SKETCHES ILLUSTRATIVE OF NORTHERN RURAL LIFE IN
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,' ETC.

SEVENTH EDITION

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1881

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

FOLLOWING on the successive publication of several editions of *Johnny Gibb*, in a cheap and popular form, a fine edition in royal octavo was published at the commencement of 1880. The feature of the work, as thus issued, was the series of illustrations executed by Mr. George Reid, R.S.A. By all competent judges these have been admitted to be, not only admirable as samples of art, but strikingly characteristic and truthful as visible embodiments, by the pencil, of the life and its surroundings sought to be portrayed by the pen. The portrait sketches, while eminently felicitous interpretations of the characters in the text, are, at same time, "genuine typical Aberdeenshire faces," such as, at the date of the story, were to be found, without difficulty, among the dwellers in many a quiet rural scene. And the charming vignette illustrations from actual localities, of which the larger part are mentioned in their literal connection in the text, need no word of commendation.

In the previous edition, which ran speedily out of print, the illustrations were most successfully engraved by M. Durand, Paris, and their present careful reproduction in lithographic form will, it is believed, be appreciated by those who have not been able to possess themselves of the more expensive volume.

ABERDEEN, *October* 1881.

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CHAPTER I.

JOHNNY GIBB SETS OUT FOR THE WELLS.

stelp
“HEELY, heely, Tam, ye glaiket stirk—ye hinna on the hin shelvin o’ the cairt. Fat hae ye been haiverin at, min? That cauff saick ’ll be tint owre the back door afore we win a mile fae hame. See ’t yer belly-ban’ be ticht aneuch noo. Woo, lassie! Man, ye been makin’ a hantle mair adee aboot blaikin that graith o’ yours, an kaimin the mear’s tail, nor balancin’ yer cairt, an’ gettin’ the things packit in till ’t.”

“Sang, that’s nae vera easy deen, I can tell ye, wi’ sic a mengyie o’ them. Faur ’ll aw pit the puckle girrs to the mear?”

“Ou, fat’s the cese o’ that lang stoups ahin, aw wud like tae ken? Lay that bit bauk across, an’ syne tak’ the aul’ pleuch ryn there, an’ wup it ticht atween the stays; we canna hae the beast’s maet trachel’t amo’ their feet. Foo muckle corn pat ye in?”

“Four lippies—gweed mizzour—will that dee?”

“We ’se lat it be deein. Is their trock a’ in noo, aw won’er?”

“Nyod, seerly it is.”

It was in the latter part of June 1839, and Johnny Gibb was preparing to set out on his annual journey to the “Walls” at Macduff. He was, at the moment of the reader’s introduction to him, employed, with the assistance of his servant man, Tam Meerison, in yokin the cairt, preparatory to starting *en route*. The time was 4.30 A.M.

Johnny Gibb was the tacksman of Gushetneuk, a two-horse haudin on the property of Sir Simon Frissal of Glen-snicker; and he and his wife had spent the greater part of a very industrious lifetime on the place.

Mrs. Gibb, in personal appearance, looked to be a woman somewhere approaching sixty, in an exceedingly good state of preservation. Dumpy in figure, inclining slightly to obesity in condition, and with cheeks of the exact hue of a high-coloured apple, she was, nevertheless, understood to be far fac stoot; she was, indeed, nervish, and apt to take drows. Hence this yearly resort to the Wells at Macduff, renowned for their restorative and invigorating virtues, had come to be a necessity for her. When Johnny Gibb had got the neeps doon, he took his carts to the mill-dam, had them backed into the water, where they were first well soaked and then scrubbed clean, after the defilement of driving out the neep muck. And then one of the first things, ordinarily, was to prepare for the usual journey to the Wells.

In the district where Johnny Gibb lived, they believed in the Walls, old and young of them. Elderly people, male and female, went to Macduff to benefit by the bracing effects of sea-bathing, combined with a course more or less rigorous of sea water taken internally, followed up by the mineral water of Tarlair; sturdy bairns were taken thither in troops for the cure of scabbit faces and sic like; youths and maidens, whose complaints seemed often not of a deadly nature, went to the Walls as they could contrive to get; Jamie Hogg went there for the benefit of his sair een; Peter Tough to mitigate the rheumatics; Mains of Yawal, when he had occasion to gae doon throu on business, actually drove his square wooden-looking gig five miles out of his direct route in order that he might have the opportunity of merely once dookin at Macduff. He lows't the gig and put his horse in to rest and feed, and I recollect distinctly seeing his tall gaunt figure in bottle-green surtout, as, despising ceremony, he strode away straight down from the fisher town, or rather the ropery, through hillocks of slippery ware