

**POEMS AND LYRICS:
CHIEFLY IN THE
SCOTTISH DIALECT**

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Poems and Lyrics: Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect by John Young

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JOHN YOUNG

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THE SCOTTISH DIALECT.

BY

JOHN YOUNG,

AUTHOR OF "HOMELY PICTURES IN VERSE," ETC.

GLASGOW:

GEORGE GALLIE, 99 BUCHANAN STREET.

1868.

John Murray Alexander,

from his Paper.

Decr 16th /
2

PREFACE.

It is said that at one time not fewer than seven cities strove for the honour of having been Homer's birth-place. Now, although it is *rather* unlikely that, say half-a-century hence, as many parishes in auld Caledonia will arise, each claiming me for its son; still, being a man of peace, I am most desirous to prevent the barest possibility of such unseemly squabbles ever taking place on my account, and have resolved to inform my own age, at least, of "the spot where I was born." This will serve a double purpose: first, as a sort of "Preface" (to me always a great bore) to this my fourth volume; and second, it will satisfy the curiosity of a few patrons, who are longing for information on this very important point. Hear it, then, and be glad, thou winding "Clazart," ye towering sheep-clad "Hills," thou bowate "Glen," and far-famed "Clachan," in whase "Auld Kirk" I was KIRKED. Hear it, I say, all of you, and be glad; for, though not coevals, we are coparishioners. Soberly, however, and not to be tediously exact, I was born in "The Blue Raw," Milton of Campsie, Stirlingshire, on the 17th November, 1825. My parents belonged to the agricultural class, and, in order to improve their condition, they, along with my bardship, then a shaveling of five years' growth, a younger brother, and a trifle of "weal hain'd gear," removed from Campsie to the north-west quarter of Glasgow, where my worthy father began business as cow-feeder, to which he subsequently added that of carter. And here I may observe that, until overtaken, through an accidental burning, by the physical debilities with which I am now, and ever must be, afflicted, viz., an all but total want of eye-sight, and a hand badly maimed, my chief occupation was that of a carter, although, when a youth, I for a short time blew the bellows and wielded the fore-hammer to "Burnswin," and afterwards wrought for a considerable period at boiler-making in one of our large city establishments. As to school education, my advantages were very favourable; but I grieve to say I did not avail myself of them as I ought to have

done, and I left school with but a very moderate stock indeed of book lore. Nor, in my riper years, was the nature of my private reading well fitted to act as a corrective to my schoolboy negligence, seeing that I drew the most of it from such questionable sources as the *London Journal*, *Reynold's Miscellany*, and such like. Neither, in my young days, had the youth of our city so many healthy places of public amusement to resort to as they have now for mental or physical relaxation. Then we had little better than our "Singing Saloons," and all of them licensed to sell strong drinks; where, amid the stifling fumes of tobacco pipes, the clatter of tankards, and too often the obscene jest and "cheek-extending oath," music (falsely so called, however,) was wed to Bacchus. To an occasional attendance at such gatherings, I must confess; and now that I have reached the wintry side of two score years, I revert to the habits acquired and the companionships formed by me there with far other than pleasurable feelings. Indeed, I now look upon such places as being so many *swatzen reef's* upon which my young life's prospects were shattered—yea, all but totally wrecked; and were I writing a "temperance tale," I would have no lack of beacon lights wherewith to warn if not to save my fellow voyagers. This, however, has often been done, and is still a-doing, by clearer heads than mine; so I forbear, and proceed with my hasty sketch.

When in my twenty-third year took unto me "for better for worse" one, who, thanks to the kind "Father of mercies," I can still call mine own, and who, amid all the ups and downs of my chequered career, in the sacred relations of wife and mother, I have ever found true as the needle to the pole. The years 1832 and 1833 were most calamitous years to me and mine. In April of the first-named year I lost my first and best tried of earthly friends, in the death of my beloved mother, and a month afterwards, by my father's retirement from business, I was cast adrift upon the world "to beg for leave to toil;" and within the narrow circuit of the second-named period, the younger two of my three little ones died, while I myself, as already indicated, was permanently unfitted for any sort of manual labour, and had to exchange my own little home, with all its fond connections, for the Poorhouse. Poorhouse life being at best but a hum-drum affair, I shall not set the reader a-yawning by narrating my lengthy experiences of it. In justice, however, to the Parochial Board, and the officials of the establish-

ment, especially the governor, with which I was for upwards of six dreary years connected, I must say that I left it with very little serious cause of personal complaint. It was inside the dull walls of a Poorhouse, and with shame I make the confession, that I for the first time began seriously to THINK, and ultimately, by the grace of God, thought gave birth, so to speak, to REASON, and upon REASON I, after one or two failures, though not without the same divine assistance, built "Resolve,"—"that column of true majesty in man." There I first cultivated a taste for sound reading, and as my eyesight was not then so far gone as it is now, I devoured everything I could beg or borrow. There, too, I composed my first verses, not with the faintest view to publication, but simply as a pastime; and, thus employed, I spent many pleasurable and profitable hours which would otherwise have hung heavily upon my hands. By-and-by, as my MSS. began to accumulate, I, on the advice of a friend, took heart and sent one of my shorter pieces, "Nanny Whisky," to a Glasgow newspaper, and was at once made the happiest of my long-faced compeers by having "Nanny" accepted, and seeing my name in print for the first time. I did not, of course, attain to this proud position *per saltum*, but had to crawl to it most laboriously. Upon the crawling process, however, I cannot enter here, and must content myself by observing that the study of the Latin lessons, in "Cassell's Popular Educator," was of the greatest service to me in composition. In the autumn of 1859, by the interest of a friend, I got the whole of my MSS. reviewed in the columns of a Glasgow newspaper. The critique being very favourable, I was anxious to publish my book, and become an author in earnest; not so much, I assure you, my reader, in the hope that I might reap even a moderate harvest of Fame, as that, by the blessing of God, it might ultimately lead to my release from the galling yoke of pauperism, restore me to the sweets of home, and to her who, foolish as I had been, was yet longing to welcome the wanderer to her faithful breast. And this, under the gracious favour of Him who has the hearts and the ways of all men in his hands, and who raised up to me at this time several patrons among the wealthier of our citizens, I was enabled to set about achieving. As a first step, I left the Poorhouse on the 31st December, 1859, and getting my volume, "Lays from the Poorhouse," published in November, 1860, completed my

manumission from a soul-crushing bondage, by ceasing to be a recipient of parochial relief, returning to the waiting arms of my outhie wee bit wifockie, and to the long vacated chair "at my ain fireside." It only remains for me to add that my first volume was well received by the public, and judiciously, perhaps tenderly, handled by the critics, as were also its successors, "Lays from the Ingle Nook" (1862), and "Homely Pictures in Verse" (1864). Here, then, courteous readers, and generous critics, we part for the present, and, if it please you, thus placed—you with this, my fourth volume in your hands, my *better-half* reading to me from some favourite author, or, what pays much better, thrang skelpin' awa at the needle, making up new garments, or so manipulating the old that "they look amaist as weel's the new," while I, with my nose in loving proximity to my book, am reading to her; or, when the SPIRIT comes over me, inditing a new poem for a *fifth* volume; and, thus occupied, I once more bid each and all of you a grateful "Good-bye."

1 Swan Lane, Port-Dundas,
Glasgow, Dec., 1867.

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