

**THE FOLK-SPEECH OF CUMBERLAND
AND SOME DISTRICTS ADJACENT;
BEING SHORT STORIES AND RHYMES
IN THE DIALECTS OF THE WEST
BORDER COUNTIES**

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The folk-speech of Cumberland and some districts adjacent; being short stories and rhymes in the dialects of the West border counties by Alexander Craig Gibson

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ALEXANDER CRAIG GIBSON

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THE
Folk-Speech of Cumberland

AND SOME DISTRICTS ADJACENT ;

BEING

SHORT STORIES AND RHYMES

IN THE DIALECTS OF THE WEST
BORDER COUNTIES,

BY

ALEXANDER CRAIG GIBSON, F.S.A.

What hempen Home-spuns have we swaggering here.
A Midsummer Night's Dream.
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
The Excursion.

LONDON: JOHN RUSSELL SMITH;
CARLISLE: GEO. COWARD.

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TO
WILLIAM DICKINSON,

OF NORTH MOSSES AND THORNCROFT,

F. L. S.,

Author of "A Glossary of Cumberland Words and Phrases,"
"Lamplugh Club," "A Prize Essay on the Agriculture
of West Cumberland," "The Botany of
Cumberland," &c., &c., &c.,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

IN CORDIAL RECOGNITION OF THE PRE-EMINENT
INDUSTRY AND SKILL DISPLAYED IN HIS ELUCIDATIONS
OF THE HOMELY SPEECH
OF OUR NATIVE COUNTY, AND IN GRATEFUL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE UNFAILING SYMPATHY
AND THE KINDLY HELP WITH WHICH HE
HAS BRIGHTENED A FRIENDSHIP
OF MANY YEARS.

P R E F A C E.

One or two of the Cumberland stories included in this volume, as well as some of the pieces in rhyme, have already been circulated very largely in newspapers, pamphlets, and collections. Their reappearance, along with many hitherto unpublished additions, in this aggregated form, is due mainly to the popularity attained by them separately. Whether they may be as popular in this more pretentious guise as in their humbler, and perhaps, more appropriate form, remains to be tried.

I claim superiority over most of the earlier workers in the same philological ground in respect of the greater purity of my dialect. The Cumberland speech as written herein is pure Cumbrian, as the speech of the Scottish pieces, introduced for variety's sake, is pure Scotch. Miss Blamire, Stagg, Anderson, Rayson,

and others, have all written their dialect pieces, more or less, in the *Scoto-Cumbrian* which prevails along the southern side of the west Border. In other respects my inferiority to those deservedly popular writers is sufficiently evident. But, as expositions of the folk-speech of those parts of the County where, and where only, the unadulterated old Norse-rooted Cumbrian vernacular is spoken, I claim for these Tales and Rhymes the distinction of surpassing all similar productions, excepting only the dialect writings of my friend Mr. Dickinson, and perhaps the *Borrowdale Letter* of Isaac Ritson, and the *Gwordie and Will* of Charles Graham. I should not omit to state, however, that Mr. John Christian of London, and a writer who assumed the *nom de plume* of Jack Todd, have evinced in their contributions to the local press, a mastery over the dialect of Whitehaven and its vicinity which makes us wish that their pens had been more prolific.

For the illustrations I have attempted of the speech of High Furness and its Westmorland border, I ask no such distinction. The dialect there, as in the adjacent parts of Cumberland, is vitiated by an intermixture of that of the County Palatine, of which Furness forms a portion; and as it is spoken, so, if

Engl.

1911

L.

Dawson

written at all, should it be written. These appear here for the reason already assigned for the introduction of the Rhymes given in the dialect of Dumfriesshire.

The work rests its claims to favourable consideration entirely on its value as a faithfully rendered contribution to the dialect literature of the country. No higher estimate is sought for it. The production of its various contents has been an occasional amusement indulged in during some of the intervals of leisure and repose afforded by pursuits of a more important, more engrossing, and it is hoped, a more useful character, with which, had it in any wise interfered, it had not been proceeded with. Its composition has been a relaxation, not a task; a divertimento, not an occupation; and had its success when published been deemed incompatible with these conditions, it had not appeared.

BERKINGTON,

December 18th, 1868.

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