

**THREE NIGHTS IN PERTHSHIRE: WITH A
DESCRIPTION OF THE FESTIVAL OF A
"SCOTCH HAIRST
KIRN" COMPRISING LEGENDARY
BALLADS ETC. IN A LETTER FROM PERCY
YORKE JR. TO J. TWISS ESQ.**

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Three Nights in Perthshire: With a Description of the Festival of a "Scotch Hairst Kirn"
Comprising Legendary Ballads Etc. in a Letter from Percy Yorke Jr. to J. Twiss Esq. by Thomas
Atkinson

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THOMAS ATKINSON

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WITH A

DESCRIPTION OF THE FESTIVAL

OF A

"SCOTCH HAIRST KIRN"

COMPRISING

LEGENDARY BALLADS ETC.

IN

A LETTER

FROM

Percy Yorke
PERCY YORKE *Jr.* to J. TWISS Esq.

H. J. Yorke

GLASGOW

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages were penned for the amusement of a private circle of acquaintances, and are printed for their use.

There is little chance of their finding their way beyond the precincts of that circle; if, however, they should accidentally catch the eye of a candid stranger, or a distant friend, in forming an opinion of them their author would beg permission to suggest for the consideration of those, that what *they* may with propriety hold to be radical faults were unavoidable from the nature of the writer's aim; and may probably best serve his purpose with that circle for whose temporary entertainment they were written.

To delight the world is the wish of most authors. I have in the following sheets limited my desires to the pleasing of a few of my friends; if *that* is attained, I am successful.

"In every work regard the writer's end."

GLASGOW, 5th Nov., 1822.



PREFATORY NOTE TO NEW EDITION.

IT may be explained that this little work is a description by the well-known Thomas Atkinson of a visit which, in company with his friend and afterwards partner in business, David Robertson, he paid to the farm of Ledard, on the shores of Loch Ard, in Perthshire.

"Three Nights in Perthshire" was originally published in 1821, the issue being limited to one hundred copies, and it was, as the advertisement states, "penned for the amusement of a private circle of acquaintances." It is also included in volume 3 of "The Chameleon," published in 1833, but in this republication some changes are made; the names of the writer's companions are altered, much of the narrative and a good many of the songs are (perhaps wisely) omitted, and the writer purports to be PERCY WENTWORTH, addressing TREVYLYAN MAYNARD, Christ Church, Oxford.

The sketch itself is forcible and attractive. The description of the scenery and mountain effects is true and powerful, the delineation of character and customs is fresh and graphic, and the whole presents a picture of a Highland festival worthy of permanent preservation.

The present limited edition has been printed at the request, and for the satisfaction, of the children of the "dramatis personæ," and others connected with the country around Loch Ard. To enhance the interest of this reprint to the present generation, the names of the members of the handsome and hospitable family at Ledard, and of the various persons alluded to *incognito*, are here given, together with such details of their after career as are now obtainable or thought necessary, as well as notes regarding other allusions in the text; but, as it seemed desirable and proper to give fuller particulars regarding the two chief characters in the play, biographical notices of these have been added.

Aberfoyle and Loch Ard are now visited by crowds of travellers from all quarters of the globe, owing to the greater facilities of railway communication; but it is well to remember, that in 1821, when Atkinson penned this sketch, "Rob Roy" had but recently been given to the world by Sir Walter Scott, and the country of the Red MacGregor was then a *terra incognita* to the general public. Under these circumstances, a description of the impressions which its attractions made on the mind of a sensitive and intelligent observer, is well worthy of being conserved in more modern guise, hence this reprint.

THOMAS ATKINSON, the author of the brochure, was a native of Glasgow, where he was born in 1801. His father was in a good way of business, and well connected. His early and slender education was superintended by his mother, a woman of considerable intellectual ability, of which Thomas had the full advantage in his training, and from her he inherited an imaginative disposition and much of his versatile ability.

After his education was completed he was apprenticed to Messrs. Brash & Reid, the well-known booksellers in Glasgow, in whose employment he remained for a considerable time. Severing his connection with this old and respectable firm, in 1823 he entered into partnership with David Robertson, and under the style of Robertson & Atkinson they took over and carried on the important and high-class bookselling business of William Turnbull, who had recently died. The new firm existed for seven years, and enjoyed considerable prosperity. The partnership was dissolved in 1830, when the two members of it separated to carry on business on their own account, Mr. Atkinson in the warehouse of the old firm at 84 Trongate, opposite to the Laigh Kirk, under the name of Atkinson & Co., whilst Mr. Robertson removed to new premises at 188 Trongate.

As a man of business Atkinson was shrewd and enterprising, alert in disposition, and active in his habits. He was, moreover, gifted with an attractive manner and a fascinating address which, quickened, as these qualifications were, by self-esteem, amounting to vanity, advantaged him greatly in his career in commerce as well as in his pursuits outside of his business.

From childhood he dabbled in literature, and wrote essays, and sketches in prose and poetry which saw the light in various periodicals of the time. His literary ambition was exalted, his efforts after its realisation untiring, and in his maturer years he produced some works of considerable imaginative power and ability. Amongst these were "The Sextuple Alliance," a poetical effusion, and many contributions to "The Western Luminary," "The Emmet," and other serial publications. He was sole Editor of "The Ant," a weekly periodical treating of the literary and general topics of the day. It extended to two volumes, the first being composed of original articles entirely from his own pen, the second comprising selections made by him from the works of other authors.

In "The Chameleon" he collected together his various literary productions for permanent preservation, and in the preface to the limited edition, published in three volumes in 1833, he states that these contain "all that I care my friends should remember was mine."

In addition to his literary powers he was possessed of great fluency and considerable talent as a public speaker and debater, which he displayed on every possible occasion, public or private. He was a prominent member of "The Literary and Commercial Society," a debating "institution" of some renown in Glasgow sixty years ago, in the ranks of which were then to be found many young men who afterwards became leaders in the literary, political, and commercial coteries of the city. Atkinson was a keen politician, and took an ardent part in the political discussions and agitations of his day. In the general election following on the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, he became a candidate for the representation of the Stirling Burghs in opposition to Lord Dalmeny, father of the present Earl of Rosebery. In this contest, from which he eventually retired, Atkinson displayed great activity and determination, and the consequent heavy strain on his energies undermined the strength of his constitution and developed in him the seeds of consumption, which before long terminated his career. In order to regain strength and to recuperate his energies he was recommended to try a sea voyage.