MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, CHIEFLY SCOTTISH

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Miscellaneous poems, chiefly Scottish by John Laing

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JOHN LAING

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, CHIEFLY SCOTTISH

Trieste

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

BY

JOHN LAING,

TROON.

Those of honour will not grudge A fellow mortal leave to speak, Especially when he speaks the truth— And truth is all that Truth darc seek.

Printed for the Anthor BY CHARLES MURCHLAND, PUBLISHER, IRVINE AND TROON.

MDCCCXCIV.

PREFACE.



NY ventures have I undertaken in the past without fear or hesitation, but this, to me, the most important venture in my career, is taken with something akin to fear and trembling. Under the impression that the following triffes carried with them sufficient merit to enable me to squeeze myself into the ranks of the minor poets of my beloved country, induced me to flatter my vanity thus

far in the publication of the present selected collection of my productions; and now that I have done so, I wait with trembling suspense the verdict of a critical jury, who, I hope, in their summing up, will take a lenient view of my case, from the fact that the enclosed are not the outpourings of one favoured with a University training, or the higher grades of education, and much of the little that I possess was gained in the quiet hours of the evening when the toil and worry of the day was gone. Truth, honesty of purpose, and a sense of justice were my sole guides in directing my pen in that which I have written, much of which was penned in defence of the oppressed against oppression, in the sincere belief and conviction under which I was labouring when the spirit of poesy overtook me. And now, Reader, no further sympathy I crave from you than a fair and impartial perusal, and then the verdict, be what it may, of an unbiased mind, leaning more to truth and justice than bigotry and prejudice.

To my subscribers I owe a deep debt of gratitude for their support in enabling me to undertake the present venture, which, but for their aid, in all likelihood, a book of poems never would have been forthcoming from the pen of

Yours truly,

566

JOHN LAING.

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December, 1894.

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SAM LEGHORN'S ELEGY.

Died, 22nd January, 1881.

 Templar folk, man, maid, an' mither, Come hing your heids an' mourn thegither ; Death has ta'en your worthy brither, Sam Leghorn ; His like, ye'll never find anither To serve your turn.

For years he was your water servant, That duty never did he swerve in't, But constantly put every nerve in't By word an' deed ; A monument ! he's weel deservin't, To mark his heid.

Whaur will ye find in a' your race A better and to fill his place, An' winna bring the cause disgrace By gaun astray, An' leaving on't the horrid trace O' usquebae ?

He wasna ane wad slip an' fa' At every tempting cup he saw, Or tak' the huff an' rin awa' Like some ye ken, At every fresh, new fangled law That was brocht ben.

He was the brither an' the friend On whom ye always could depend ; A truer scarcely stepped ben Within your lodge, An' kept his pledge e'en to the end Withoot a grudge.

An' then again, 'mid a' your clan, Whaur had ye ane that better ran Wi' carthen jug or metal can

To draw your water ; Richt weel ye ken that scarcely ane Could dune it better. Likewise for mirth an' honest glee, There were nane heartier than he, When he, a' life, wad join the spree Wi' tale or sang ; His '' Sodger John '' aye fain to gie Baith loud an' lang.

But he, alas I nae mair ye'll hail, To cheer ye thro' this lonely vale, Or enliven ye wi' yon auld tale Aboot the meal, Whilk he aft tauld withooten fail, An' cheer'd ye weel.

Ye weel may hing your heids an' moan, Au' sab an' greet in mournfu' tone, Ye'll hear nac mair o' " Sodger John," Or " Erin-go-Braugh ;" Your noblest singer's but a drone, Noo Sam's awa'.

Ye villagers o' Troon may well Hing down your heids an' mourning tell Hoo he in life did soun' his bell The village round, An' wi' stentorian lungs wad yell Things lost or found.

Ye'll ne'er again get sie a chiel To bell the village hanf sae weel ; When herrin', mackerel, skate, or cel, By fishermen, Are caught by tempting bait or creel, Hoo will ye ken?

Guid, honest Leghorn, fare-thee-well, Till the auld kirk tolls my dying knell ; If name thee mourn, Fll mourn mysel', In boundless woe, An' will to future ages tell

Thy worth below.