

THE POETICAL WORKS

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The poetical works by Hugh MacDonald

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HUGH MACDONALD

**THE POETICAL
WORKS**

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POETICAL WORKS

OF THE LATE

HUGH MACDONALD,

AUTHOR OF "RAMBLES ROUND GLASGOW,"
"DAYS AT THE COAST," &c.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

GLASGOW :
ROBERT FORRESTER, STOCKWELL STREET.
1865.

145A
1857

PREFACE.

THE Poetical Works of the late HUGH MACDONALD are now for the first time given to the world in a collected form. Various unforeseen circumstances have delayed their publication since the death of the author; but it is satisfactory to think that during the whole period which has elapsed, a growing desire has been manifested on the part of his friends and admirers to see justice done to his poetical merits. The volume now issued will speak for itself; and, as the profits accruing from its publication will be handed over without deduction to the author's widow, it is to be hoped that it will be widely circulated.

GLASGOW, May 1863.

Free Sets - English

MEMOIR.

THREE years have elapsed since we followed the remains of the late HUGH MACDONALD to their last resting-place, in the Southern Necropolis. It was "a raw and gusty day," the rain fell in torrents, and "the wind blew as 'twas blawn its last," yet three hundred men of mind and merit, kindred spirits to the beloved dead, did battle in a long struggling row with the boisterous elements, and "bode the pelting of the pitiless storm," till they saw the mortal part of the genial and gifted Caleb committed to the dust. Three years after that memorable and mournful funeral, we find that the history of the departed bard is still to write. Shall his literary friends take blame to themselves that the work has been so long delayed? We trow not. The stormy burial day seems but as yesterday, and the memory of our friend is as fresh and green, and held in as sweet remembrance as on the bleak March day when his mortal part was consigned to the tomb. It says more for the man, that after this lapse of time

his admirers still clamour for the publication of his poetical works, with a memoir of his life, and a dissertation on his writings. Moreover, every month that has passed has added new stones to the cairn of Caleb, and increased the volume of his fame.

On several occasions since his death, the newspaper press of Scotland has done considerable justice to his many admirable qualities of head and heart; but a more permanent and lasting record of his history is widely desiderated. We have undertaken the task with much diffidence, as one of the very least of those from whom the duty might be expected. We shall attempt it cheerfully, promising that none of the more prominent members of the literary profession could have brought to the discharge of the duty a more willing mind to do the subject justice, or a more enthusiastic reverence for the memory of the gifted dead.

The "Rambles Round Glasgow" and "Days at the Coast" have fully established Hugh Macdonald's reputation as a prose author. By the present work, we claim for him an enduring place in the ranks of our national bards.

Hugh Macdonald was a native of the east-end of Glasgow, a district to which he retained throughout his whole life a warm and ardent attachment. He was

born in Rumford Street, Bridgeton, on the 4th of April, 1817. His parents were in humble circumstances, and their family being numerous, Hugh had to dispense with that which we would now regard as a liberal education, and was sent to work at an early age. He was apprenticed to the block-printing trade, and was first employed in the works of Messrs. Henry Monteith & Co., at Barrowfield, which he has described in one of his poems as "The Guid Auld Field." The education which he did not derive from books, he acquired in his young days from nature. He was familiar with every hill and dale from the Mearns Moor to Campsie Glen, and had explored the whole course of the Clyde, from Stonebyres Linn to Bowling Braes. No dell was so sequestered that he could not discover it; no stream so tortuous that he could not trace its deviations. The whole of Clydesdale was dear to "the Rambler." Its flowers were the loveliest, its birds lilted with the most melodious cadence, its springs gushed with the purest waters. The haunted and hoary castles of the district, rich in historical associations, the "auld brigs," the battle fields—the graves of martyrs, heroes, and bards—and the birth-places of the great departed, were all known to him. The bent of his mind led him to indulge in social rambles, even at an early age. Anti-

quary, poet, botanist, topographer, tradesman, songster, and literateur, rolled into one, he found supreme delight in wandering among the luxuriant glades and sheltered valleys within an accessible distance of his native suburb. The places where he was found most frequently, were the "guid auld town" of Rutherglen, and Cathkin Braes. In Rutherglen he found his "Highland Mary," and from the same town he took his "Bonnie 'Jean." He did not resemble the majority of poets in the number of his attachments; and our firm belief is, that he loved but twice, and that he married both of the objects of his affection. To use a phrenological simile, without expressing any faith in the science, his bump of conjugality must have been much larger than his purely amative development.

Mr. Macdonald was frugal as well as industrious; and having saved a little money, he embarked it in a grocery and provision shop in Bridgeton, with the laudable object of improving his circumstances and securing a competency.

"Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent."

But his nature was too open and generous to conduct a huckstering business with profit to himself. Not only

did he deal fairly and honestly with his customers, but he gave credit to all who asked it. Whoever patronised him, was in his eyes as upright as himself; and his disposition was too amiable to press his debtors for payment, when they professed themselves unable to settle their accounts. The result may easily be guessed. He was compelled to relinquish the provision trade, after having lost all his earnings in the category of bad debts. Let us hope that, in accordance with the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer, his trespasses will be forgiven, as he forgave those who trespassed against him. Having been unsuccessful as a shop-keeper, Mr. Macdonald discharged all his liabilities, and honourably retired from business with a mere trifle in his possession. He then returned to the block-printing trade, and found employment at Colinslie, near Paisley, in the establishment of Messrs. Harrow, McIntyre, & Co. He continued to reside in Bridgeton however, and walked from and to his work, a distance in all of sixteen miles every day. This afforded a noble example of sturdy industry, which has rarely been surpassed. Not only in fair weather and bright sunshine, but amid pelting storms of wind and rain did our author trudge twice-a-day on foot from Bridgeton to Paisley, and regularly completed his ten or twelve hours of arduous physical exertion.