

HUMOROUS POEMS;

10

CONSISTING OF

HALLOWE'EN,

THE GUDEWIFE O' GUILSTON,

SCOTCH DRINK,

AND THE

BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.



GLASGOW:

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HUMOROUS FORMS

HALL OF MIMICRY

THE GUDWIRE OF GIBSON

SCOTT-DANA

AND THE

BATTLE OF BEDFORD



CLASSICAL

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1851

10

HUMOROUS POEMS.

HALLOWE'EN.*

*“ Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.”*

GOLDSMITH.

Upon that night, when Fairies light,
On Cassilis-Downans † dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or from Colean the rowte is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove, ‡ to stray and rove,
Among the rocks and streams,
To sport that night.

* It is thought to be a night, when devils, witch-
and other mischief-making beings; are all abroad
in their baneful midnight errands; particularly
those aerial people—the fairies, are said, on that
night, to hold a grand anniversary.

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in
the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls
of Cassilis.

‡ A noted cavern, near Colean-house, called the
Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans,
is famed, in country story, for being a favourite
haunt of fairies.

Amang the bonny winding banks,
 Whar Doon rins, wimplin', clear,
 Whar Bruce * ance rul'd the martial ranks,
 And shook his Carrick spear,
 Some merry, friendly, countra focks,
 Together did conveen,
 To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,
 To hand their Hallowe'en,
 Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, and cleanly neat,
 Mair braw than when they're fine;
 Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe;
 Hearts leal, and warm, and kin':
 The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs
 Weel knotted on their gartin;
 Some unco blate, and some wi' gabs,
 Gar lasses' hearts gang startin',
 Whyles fast that night.

Then, first and foremost, through the kail,
 Their stocks † maun a' be sought ance;
 They steek their een, and graip and wale
 For muckle anes, and straught anes.

* The famous family of that name, the ancestors of ROBERT, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

† The first ceremony of Hallowe'en is pulling each a stock or plant of kail. They must go out hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with; its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any vird. or earth, stick to the root, that

Pair haverel Will fell aff the drift,
 And wander'd through the bow-kail;
 And poud, for want o' better shift,
 A runt was like a sow-tail,
 Sae bowt that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
 They roar and cry a' thro' ther;
 The vera wee things, toddlin, rin,
 Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
 And if the castock's sweet or sour
 Wi' jocktelegs they taste them;
 Syne coziely aboon the door,
 Wi' cannie care they've plac'd them,
 To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a',
 To pou their stalks o' corn;*
 But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
 Behint the muckle thorn:

is, tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the castock, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition.—Lastly, the stems, or to give them their ordinary appellation,—the runts, are placcd somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.

* They go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

He grippit Nelly hard and fast;
 Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
 But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
 Whan kittlin i' the Fause-house*
 Wi' him that night.

The auld gudewife's weel-hoordit nits;
 Are round and round divided,
 And monie lads and lasses' fates
 Are there that night decided:
 Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
 And burn thegithert rimly;
 Some start awa, wi' saucy pride,
 And jump out-owre the chimlie,
 Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie ee;
 Wha 'twas she wadna tell;
 'But this is Jock, and that is me,'
 She says in to hersel:
 He bleez'd owre her, and she owre him,
 As they wad never mair part,
 Till, fuff! he started up the lum,
 And Jean had e'en a sair heart
 To see't that night.

* When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c. makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is most exposed to the wind; this he calls a Fause-house.

† Burning the nuts is a favourite charm.—They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the issue of the courtship will be.

Fair Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
 Was brunt by primsie Mallie;
 And Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
 To be compar'd to Willie:
 Mall's nit lap out, wi' pridesu' sling,
 And her ain fit it brunt it;
 While Willie lap, and swore by jing,
 'Twas just the thing he wanted
 To be that night.

Bell had the Fause-house in her mir,
 She pits hersel and Rob in;
 In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
 Till white in aise they're sobbin:
 Nell's heart was danciu at the view;
 She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
 Rob, stownlins, pried her bonnie mou,
 Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
 Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
 She leaves them gashin at their cracks,
 And slips out by hersel:
 She through the yard the nearest tak,
 And to the kiln she goes then,
 And darklins graipit for the bauks,
 And in the blue clue * throws then,
 Right feart that night.

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions:—Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot 7 clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something

And ay she wint, and ay she swat;
 I wat she made nae jaukin;
 Till something held within the pat;
 Gude L—d! but she was quakin!
 But whether 'twas the deil himsel,
 Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
 Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
 She didua wait on talkin
 To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
 'Will ye gae wi' me, grannie?
 I'll eat the apple * at the glass
 I gat frae uncle Jolinnie.'
 She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
 She notic't nae an isle brunt
 Her braw new worset apron
 Out-through that night.

'Ye little skelpie limmer's face,
 I daur you try sic sportin,
 As seek the foul thief ony place,
 For him to spae your fortune;
 Nae doubt ye may get a sight,
 Great cause ye hae to fear it;

will hold the thread; demand, 'Wha hauds?' that is, 'Who holds?' An answer will be returned from the kiln pot, by naming the Christian and Surname of your future spouse.

* Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it; and, some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time: the face of your conjugal companion to be, will be seen in the glass, as peeping over your shoulder.

For monie ane has gotten a fright,
 And liv'd and di'd deleeret,
 On sic a night.

Ae har'st afore the Sherra-muir,
 I mind it as weel's yestreen,
 I was a gilpy then, I'm sure
 I was nae past fifteen:
 The simmer had been cauld and wat,
 And stuff was unco green,
 And aye a rantin kirn was gat,
 And just on Hallowe'en
 It fell that night.

Our stibble-rig was Rob M'Graen,
 A clever sturdy fallow;
 Hi sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
 That liv'd in Achmacalla:
 He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel,
 And he made unco light o't,
 But monie a day was by-himsel,
 He was sae sairly frightened
 That vera night.'

* Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp seed, harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed, I saw thee, hemp-seed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'Come after me, and show thee;' that is, 'Show thyself;' in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'Come after me and harrow thee.'

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
 And he swore by his conscience,
 That he could saw hemp-seed a peck,
 For it was a' but nonsense.
 The auld gudeman raught down the poek,
 And out a handfu' gied him;
 Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the fock,
 Some time when nae ane see'd him,
 And try't that night.

He marches-through amang the stacks,
 Though he was something startin;
 The graip he for a harrow taks,
 And hauls at his curpin:
 And every now and then, he says,
 'Hemp-seed, I saw thee;
 And her that is to be my lass,
 Come after me, and draw thee,
 As fast this night.'

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march,
 To keep his courage cheerie,
 Although his hair began to arch,
 He was sae fley'd and eerie:
 Till presently he hears a squeek,
 And then a grane and gruntle!
 He by his shouther gae a keek,
 And tumbled wi' a wintle
 Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
 In dreadful desperation!
 And young and auld came rinnin out,
 To hear the sad narration:
 He swore 'twas hilchin Jean M'Crow,
 Or crouchie Merran Humphie,

Till, stop! she trotted through them a':
 And wha was it but Grumphie,
 Asteer that night.

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gane,
 To win' three wechts o' naething;*
 But for to meet the deil her lane,
 She pat but little faith in:
 She gies the herd a pickle nits,
 And twa red cheekit apples,
 To watch, while for the barn she sets,
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples
 That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
 And owre the threshold ventures;
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
 Syne bauldly in she enters:
 A ratton rattled up the wa',
 And she cried, L—d preserve her!

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off their hinges, if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht, and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind: Repeat it three times, and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance and retinue marking the employment or station in life.

And ran through midden-hole and a',
 And pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
 Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' fair advice,
 They hecht him some fine braw ane:
 It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,*
 Was timmer-propt for thrawin:
 He taks a swirlie auld moss oak,
 For some black, grousome carlin:
 And loot a winze, and drew a stroke,
 Till skin in blypes cam haulin
 Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
 As cantie as a kittlin;
 But, och! this night, amang the shaws,
 She gat a fearfu' settlin!
 She through the whins, and by the cairn,
 And o'er the hill gaed srieivin,
 Whar three lairds' lands met at a burn,†
 To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
 Was bent that night.

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bear-stack; and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

† You go out, one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south running spring or rivulet, where three lairds' lands meet, and dip your left shirt-sleeve; go to bed, in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry; lie awake, and, some time before midnight, an apparition, having the

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
 As through the glen it wimpled;
 Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpled;
 Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
 Whyles cockit underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel,
 Unsèen that night.

Amang the branches, on the brae,
 Between her and the moon,
 The deil, or else some outler quey,
 Gat up, and gae a croon:
 Puir Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
 Near laverock-height she jumpit;
 But mist a fit, and in the pool,
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
 Wi' a plunge that night,

In order, on the clean hearthstane,
 The luggies three * are ranged;

exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

* Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth, where the dishes are ranged; he or she dips the left hand: if, by chance, in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

And every time great care is ta'en
 To see them duly changed:
 Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
 Sin' Mar's year did desire,
 Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
 He heav'd them on the fire
 In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
 I wat they didna weary;
 And unco tales, and funny jokes,
 Their sports were cheap and cheery;
 Till butter'd sow'ns,* wi' fragrant lunt,
 Set a' their gabs a-steerin;
 Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
 They parted aff careerin,
 Fu' blythe that night.

BURN

THE GUDEWIFE O' GUILSTON.

To farrish matter for some rhymes,
 I'll tell a tale o' former times:—

A FARMER, near the east nook o' Fife,
 Was carried aff in prime o' life,
 And left a widow fu' o' grief,
 Her sorrow real, but unco brief.
 At first nae comfort would she hear,
 Frae scripture, or frae reason clear;

* Sowans, with butter instead of milk to them
 is always the Hallo' e'en supper.

Although the priest, and her neist elder,
 In pointed language plainly tell'd her,—
 'We're here the day—awa' to-morrow,
 Nor should be swallow'd up wi' sorrow.'

After a short, but decent season,
 The widow thus began to reason:—
 'Why should I for a husband mourn,
 Will greetin gar the man return?
 Now, though her storm o' grief blew over,
 She didna turn a wanton lover;
 Although it also must be granted,
 Anither husband soon she wanted:
 But this was only on condition,
 Of asking the divine permission.

Full sax lang weeks were gane and past,
 After the farmer breath'd his last,
 When, having clos'd her house affairs,
 Ae e'ning she was at her prayers.
 'Twas in the barn,—the usual place,—
 Whare loud she pray'd for gear and grace.
 Here then she wrestled hard and fervent,
 That God would pity his puir servant;
 As her dear husband now had left her,
 And o' ae comfort had bereft her;
 As he was ané o' her ain chusing,
 And really ane amang a thousand,
 She pray'd, if such was Heaven's decree,
 Anither just as gude as he
 Might influenced be to court her,
 Nor wad she keep him lang in torture;
 But mak him happy, wi' her haun,
 Wi' stock and farm at his commaund.

The righteous' prayers availeth mach,
 And Maggie's prayers were really such.
 Her servant man, a sturdy chield,
 As ever swung a flail or teild,

In secret truly did adore her,
 Was ae night in the barn before her;
 Wi' nae design to interrup' her,
 But shake some strae the beast to supper
 When in comes Margaret, stark and stout
 And to her prayers began devoutly,
 And after seeking spiritual things,
 The married state about she brings.
 Jock in a corner lay fu' snug,
 Lending an eager tentie lug:
 He, being a lad o' ready wit,
 Conceiv'd a wise and lucky hit,
 To work on Maggie's superstition,
 And thus accomplish his ambition.
 A sheet lay huddled in the nook,
 Which Jock on this occasion took,
 To clead himsel' in snawy white,
 And personate an angel bright.
 The silver moon shone in her vigour,
 When, by the bole, Meg saw the figure.
 In accents solemn, deep and hollow,
 Her close attention he made follow:—
 'Thy prayers are heard, and shall be granted,
 Nor shall a husband lang be wanted:
 It therefore is the will o' God,
 That you should marry Johnnie Tod;
 Though he be but your servant man,
 And neither has a pat nor pan;
 He's young, religious, chaste, and thrifty,
 And acts just like a man o' fifty.
 By day wi' care he'll sort your farm,
 By night he'll daut and kecp you warm.'
 The widow maist was in a trance, Sir,
 At hearing sic a gracious answer.
 Jock reach'd the kitchen, unperceiv'd,
 And quietly at his stocking weav'd;

Whan in the widow comes fu' prim,
 And lovingly she looks 'at him.
 Johnnie, my man, you'll see but dimly,
 Working ahint the cradle chinly;
 The backside ribs are cauld and dark,
 And you hae hain a sair day's wark.
 Come roun', and fill the twa-arm chair;
 And here's the kebbuck,—tak your sair:
 Frae this time forth, believe me, John,
 'Thous never get a cheeseless scone.'

'The lasses at their wheels were linkin',
 And scarce could keep frae nods and winkin';
 They thought it was a matter oddlike,
 To hear their mistress hint sae broadlike;
 For baith o' Jock had some daft notion,
 Baith lang had been at his devotion;
 Lang to his wants they had attended,
 And aft his sarks and breeks had mended;
 And mony a dunt o' cheese and bread,
 And mony a cake o' butter spread,
 And mony a cog o' cards and cream,
 They steal'd to fill his craving wame;
 But now baith fear'd 'twas labour lost,
 And that their love wad soon be cross'd.

John soon, wi' manners mild and honest,
 Improv'd his mistress' hints the broadest.
 Within ae fleeting month he wed his charmer,
 And liv'd and died a much respeckit farmer.

SCOTCH DRINK.

*Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
 That's sinking in despair;*

ood fills the wame, and keeps us livin,
 'hough life's a gift no worth receivin,
 When heavy dragg'd wi' pine and grievin:
 But oil'd by thee,
 The wheels o' life gae down-hill scrievin,
 Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lair;
 Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
 Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
 At's weary toil;
 Thou even brightens dark Despair
 Wi' gloomy smile.

Thou art clad in massy siller weed;
 Wi' Gentles thou erects thy head;
 Let humbly kind, in time of need,
 The poor man's wine;
 His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
 Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
 But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
 Even godly meetings o' the saints,
 By thee inspir'd,
 When gaping, they besiege the tents,
 Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
 Sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
 Or reekin on a New-year's mornin
 In cog or bicker,
 And just a wee drap spiritual burn in;
 And gusty sucker.

aeworth the brandy, burning trash !
 All source o' monie a pain and brash !
 Wines monie a poor doylt drucken hash
 O' hauf his days ;
 And sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
 To her warst faes.

Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well,
 Chief, to you my tale I tell.
 For plackless deevils, like mysel' !
 It sets you ill,
 I' bitter, dearthfu' wines to meil,
 Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his bladder wrench,
 And goûts, torment him. inch by inch,
 Wha twists his gruntie wi' a glunch
 O' sour disdain,
 That owre a glass o' whisky-punch
 Wi' honest men.

Whisky ! soul o' plays and pranks,
 Except a bardie's humble thanks ;
 When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
 Are my poor verses
 Thou comes—they rattle i' the ranks
 At ithers' arses !

See, Fairntosh, O sadly lost !
 Scotland, lament frae coast to coast ;
 Now cholic-grips, and barking hoast,
 May kill us a',
 For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
 Is ta'en awa !

Thae curs'd loch-leeches o' the Excise,
 Wha mak the whisky-stells their prize,
 Haud up thy han', deil, ance, twice, thrice !
 Their seize the blinkers
 And bake them up in brunstané pies,
 For puir d—n'd drinker

Fortune, if thou'lt but gie me stull
 Hale breeks, a scone, a whisky-gill,
 And rowthe o' rhyme to rove at will,
 'Tak' a' the rest,
 And deal't about as thy blind skill
 Directs thee best.

BURNS.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

It was a summer evening
 Old Kaspar's work was done;
 And he, before his cottage door
 Was sitting in the sun.
 And by him sported on the green
 His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
 Roll something large and round,
 Which he beside the rivulet,
 In playing there had found.
 He came to ask what he had found,
 That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
 Who stood expectant by;
 And then the old man shook his head,
 And with a natural sigh,

'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
Who fell in the great victory.

find them in the garden, for
'There's many here about ;
and often when I go to plough,
'The ploughshave turns them out ;
or many thousand men,' said he,
'Were slain in the great victory.'

Now tell us what 'twas all about,
Young Peterkin he cries ;
and little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
Now tell us all about the war,
and what they killed each other for.

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
'Who put the French to rout ;
but what they killed each other for,
I could not well make out.
But everybody said,' quoth he,
'That 'twas a famous victory.'

'My father liv'd at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
'They burn'd his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forc'd to fly ;
so with his wife and child he fled,
for had he where to rest his head.

'With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
and many a childing mother then
And new-born infant died.
But things like that, you know, must be
at every famous victory.'

They say it wa- a shocking sight
 After the field was won,
 For many thousand bodies here
 Lay rotting in the sun ;
 But things like that, you know, must be
 After a famous victory -

Great praise the Duke of Marlborough w
 And our good Prince Eugene !
 ' Why, 'twas a very wicked thing !'
 Said little Wilhelmine.
 ' Nay—nay—my little girl,' quoth he,
 ' It was a famous victory.

And every body prais'd the duke,
 Who such a fight did win.'
 ' But what good came of it at last ?'
 Quoth little Peterkin.
 ' Why that I cannot tell,' said he,
 ' But 'twas a famous victory.'

SOUTHEY

FINIS.