MODERN

RECITER,

A SELECTION STATE

MOST POPULAR PIECES

RECITATION,

PRINCIPALLY FROM

SIR WALTER SCOTT, CAMPBELL, LORD BYRON, HOGG, WOLFE, AND OTHER POETS OF THE DAY.

KILMARNOCK:

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THE RECITER:

On the Manner of Reading Verse.

66 WHATEVER difficulties we may find in reading prose, they are greatly increased when the composition is in verse: and more particularly if the verse be rhyme. The regularity of the feet, and the sameness of sound in rhyming verse, strongly solicits the voice to a sameness of tone; and tone, unless directed by a judicious ear, is apt to degenerate into a song, and a song, of all others, the most disgusting to a person of just taste. If, therefore, there are few who read prose with propriety, there are still fewer who succeed in verse. For those, therefore, whose ears are not just, and who are totally deficient in a true taste for the music of poetry, the best method of avoiding this impropriety is to read verse exactly as if it were prose; for though this may be said to be an error, it is certainly an error on the safer side.

"To say, however, as some do, that the pronunciation of verse is entirely destitute of song, and that it is no more than a just pronunciation of prose, is far distant from truth. Poetry without song is a body without a soul. The tune of this song is, indeed, difficult to hit; but when once it is hit, it is sure to give the most exquisite pleasure. It excites in the hearer the most eager desire of imitation; and if this desire be not accompanied by a just taste of good instruction, it generally substitutes the tum ti, tum ti, as it is called, for simple, elegant, poetic harmony.

* * *

"It must, however, be confessed, that elegant readers of verse often verge so nearly on what is called sing song, without falling into it, that it is no wonder those who attempt to imitate them, slide into that blemish which borders so nearly on a beauty."

Walker.

Glenara.

OH! heard ye you pibroch sound sad in the gale, Where a band cometh slowly with weeping and wail?

'Fis the Chief of Glenara laments for his dear;' And her sire and her people are called to her bier.

Glenara came first with the mourners and shroud; Her kinsmen they follow'd, but mourned not aloud;

Their plaids all their bosoms were folded around; They march'd all in silence—they look'd to the ground.

In silence they reach'd over mountain and moor, To a heath, where the oak-tree grew lonely and hoar,

Now here let us place the gray-stone of her

Why speak ye no word?' said Glenara the stern.

And tell me, I charge you, ye clan of my spouse, Why fold ye your mantles, why cloud ye your brows?

So spake the rude chieftain: no answer is made, But each mantle unfolding, a dagger display'd. 'I dream'd of my lady, I dream'd of her shroud,' Cried a voice from the kinsmen, all wrathful and loud;

And empty that shroud, and that coffin did seem:

Glenara! Glenara! now read me my dream!'

Oh! pale grew the cheek of that chieftain I ween; When the shroud was unclosed, and no body was seen;

Then a voice from the kinsmen spoke louder in scorn—

'Twas the youth that had loved the fair Ellen of Lorn.

I dream'd of my lady, I dream'd of her grief, I dream'd that her lord was a barbarous chief; On a rock of the ocean fair Ellen did seem: Glenara! Glenara! now read me my dream!

In dust low the traitor has knelt to the ground, And the desert reveal'd where his lady was found; From a rock of the ocean that beauty is borne; Now joy to the house of fair Ellen of Lorn!

On the Death of Sir John Moore.

Nor a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse o'er the ramparts we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot,
O'er the grave where our hero was buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night, The sods with our bayonets turning,

By the struggling moonbeam's dusky light, And our lanterns dimly burning.

No useless costin enclosed his breast,

Nor in sheet nor in shroud we wound him;
But he lay—like a warrior taking his rest—

With his martial cloak around him!

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,
And we bitterly thought of to-morrow—

We thought—as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
And smooth'd down his lonely pillow—
How the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his
head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold askes upbraid him;
But nothing he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock toll'd the hour for retiring,
And we heard by the distant and random gun,
That the fo was suddenly firing—

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame, fresh and gory!
We carved not a line, we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone in his glory!

Wolfe.

Hymn on Modern Greece.

THE isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
Where Delos rose, and Phæbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun; is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo farther west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Bless'd.'

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persian's grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sat on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Saiamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country?—On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuncless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

Tho' link'd among a fetter'd race,
o feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
or what is less the poet here?
or Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must we but blush?—Our fathers bled.
arth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
If the three hundred, grant but three
o make a new Thermopyle!

What, silent still? and silent all?

Ah! no;—the voices of the dead

bound like a distant torrent's fall,

And answer, Let one living head,

ut one arise,—we come, we come!

Tis but the living who are dumb.

r vain—in vain; strike other chords;

Fill high the cup with Samian wine!

eave battles to the Turkish hordes,

And shed the blood of Scio's vine!

lark! rising to the impoble call—

low answers each bold bacchanal!

Ou have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
If two such lessens, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
Ou have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

We will not think of themes like these!

It made Anacreon's song divine:

He served—but served Polycrates—

A tyrant; but our masters then

Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend:
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend.
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down the cup of Samian wine!

Byron.

Lord Ullin's Daughter.

A CHIEFTAIN to the Highlands bound, Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry, And I'll give thee a silver pound, To row us o'er the ferry!'—

Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?'
O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter:—

And fast before her father's men,
Three days we've fled together;
or should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather—

His horsemen hard behind us ride—
Should they our steps discover,
hen—who would cheer my bonny bride,
When they have slain her lover?"—

Jutspoke the hardy Highland wight,
I'll go, my chief—I'm ready:—
tis not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady!

'And, by my word, the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So—though the waves are raging white—
I'll row you o'er the ferry!'—

By this the storm grew loud apace,
I'he water-wraith was shrieking,
And in the scowl of heaven, each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glon rode armed men!
Their trampling sounded nearer!

Oh! haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
'I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'—

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When—oh! too strong for human hand!—
The tempest gather'd o'er her—

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reach'd that fatal shore—
His wrath was chang'd to wailing—

 Come back! come back!' he cried in grief,

· Across this stormy water:

And I'll forgive your Highland chief, My daughter!—Oh! my daughter!'

Iwas vain! the loud waves lash'd the shore, Return or aid preventing:

The waters wild went o'er his child-And he was left lamenting. Campbell.

The Fate of Macgregor.

MACGREGOR, Macgregor, remember our fee-

The moon rises broad from the brow of Ben-Lomond.

The clans are impatient, and chide thy delay: Arise! let us bound to Glen-Lyon away.'

Stern scowl'd the Macgregor, then silent and sullen,

He turn'à his red eye to the braes of Strathfillan; Go, Malcolm, to sleep, let the clans be dismiss'd

The Campbells this night for Macgregor must rest.

Macgregor, Macgregor, our scouts have been flying,

Three days, round the hills of M'Nab and Glen-Lyon;

Of riding and running such tidings they bear, We must meet them at home else they'll quickly be here.

The Campbell may come, as his promises bind him,

And haughty M. Nab with his giants behind him; This night I am bound to relinquish the fray, And do what it freezes my vitals to say.

Forgive me, dear brother, this horror of mind;
Thou know'st in the strife I was never behind,
Nor ever receded a foot from the van,
Or blench'd at the ire or the prowess of man.
But I've sworn by the cross, by my God, and by
all!

An oath which I cannot, and dare not recall,— Ere the shadows of midnight fall east from the pile,

To meet with a spirit this night in Glen-Gyle.

Last night, in my chamber, all thoughtful and lone,

I call'd to remembrance some deeds I had done, When enter'd a lady, with visage so wan, And looks, such as never were fasten'd on man. I knew her, O brother! I knew her full well! Of that once fair dame such a tale I could tell As would thrill thy bold heart; but how long she remain'd.

So rack'd was my spirit, my bosom so pain'd I knew not—but ages seem'd short to the while. Though proffer the Highlands, nay, all the Green Isle,

With length of existence no man can enjoy, The same to endure, the dread proffer I'd fly! The thrice-threaten'd pangs of last night to fore-

Macgregor would dive to the mansions below.

Despairing and mad, to futurity blind, The present to shun, and some respite to find, swore, ere the shadow fell east from the pile, o meet her alone by the brook of Glen-Gyle.

She told me, and turn'd my chill'd heart to a stone,

The glory and name of Macgregor was gone;
That the pine, which for ages had shed a bright halo,
far on the mountains of Highland Glen-Falo,
hould wither and fall ere the turn of you moon,
mit through by the canker of hated Colquhoun:
hat a feast on Macgregors each day should be
common,

or years, to the eagles of Lennox and Lomond.

A parting embrace, in one moment, she gave, ler breath was a furnace, her boson the grave! hen flitting elusive, she said, with a frown, The mighty Macgregor shall yet be my own!'

Macgregor, thy fancies are wild as the wind; he dreams of the night have disorder'd thy mind.

ome, buckle thy panoply—march to the field te, brother, how hack'd are thy helmet and shield!

y, that was McNab, in the height of his pride, hen the lions of Dochart stood firm by his side. his night the proud chief his presumption shall rue;

isc, brother, these chinks in his heart-blood will glue:

thy fantasies frightful shall flit on the wing, hen loud with thy bugle Glen-Lyon shall ring?

Like glimpse of the moon through the storm of the night,

Macgregor's red eye shed one sparkle of light:

It faded—it darken'd—he shudder'd—he sigh'd—
No! not for the universe! low he replied,

Away went Macgregor, but went not alone; To watch the dread rendezvous, Malcolm has

They car'd the broad Lomond, so still and serenelly And deep in her bosom, how awful the scene!

O'er mountains inverted the blue waters curl'd, And rock'd them on skies of a far nether world.

All silent they went, for the time was approaching;

The moon the blue zenith already was touching; No foot was abroad on the forest or hill,
No sound but the lullaby sung by the rill;
Young Malcolm at distance, couch'd, trembling the while,—

Macgregor stood lone by the brook of Glen-Gyle.

Few minutes had pass'd, ere they spied on the stream,

A skiff sailing light, where a lady did seem;
Her sail was the web of the gossamer's loom,
The glow-worm her wakelight, the rainbow her boom;

A dim rayless beam was her prow and her mast, Like wold-fire, at midnight, that glares on the

The rough was the river with rock and cascade, No torrent, no rock, her velocity staid; She wimpled the water to weather and lee, And heaved as if borne on the waves of the sea.

ne wild deer of Gairtney abandon'd his den, ed panting away, over river and icle, or once turn'd his eye to the brook of Glen.

Gyle.

The fox fled in terror, the eagle awoke, slumbering he dozed in the shelf of the rock; tonish'd, to hide in the moon-beam he flew, I had screw'd the night-heaven till lost in the blue.

Young Malcolm beheld the pale lady approach, ne chieftain salute her, and shrink from her touch.

saw the Macgregor kneel down on the plain, begging for something he could not obtain; le raised him indignant, derided his stay, men bore him on board, set her sail, and away.

Tho fast the red bark down the river did glide, it faster ran Malcolm adown by its side; Macgregor! Macgregor!' he bitterly cried; Macgregor! Macgregor!' the echoes replied struck at the lady, but strange though it seem, s sword only fell on the rocks and the stream; t the groans from the boat, that ascended amain;

ere groans from a bosom in horror and pain. ney reach'd the dark lake, and bore lightly away; acgregor is vanish'd for ever and aye! Hogo.

Lochinvar.

r, young Lochinvar is come out of the west! crough all the wide border his steed was the best:

And save his good broad-sword he weapon he none,

He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone! So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war, There never was night like the young Lochinvalle

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone.

He swam the Eske river where ford there wa

But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar!

So boldy he enter'd the Netherby Hall, 'Mong bride's men, and kinsmen, and brothers and all!—

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword—

For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word—

Or to dance at our bridal? young Lord Lochinvar!

I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied: Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its

And now am I come, with this lost love of mine, To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine!

There be maidens in Scotland, more levely by far,

That would gladly be bride to the young Loch-invar!

The bride kiss'd the goblet; the knight took it up.
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup!

She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,—

With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.

He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—

Now tread we a measure !' said young Lochin-

That never a hall such a galliard did grace! While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,

and the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet

and the bride-maidens whisper'd 'Twere bet-

o have match'd our fair cousin with young

he touch to her hand, and one word in her ear, hen they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near,

b light to the croupe the fair lady he swung, b light to the saddle before her he sprung! The is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;

hey'll have fleet steeds that follow!' quoth: young Lochinvar.

here was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;

sters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;

There was racing, and chasing, on Cannobie Lea, But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see! So daring in love, and so dauntless in war, Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar!

The Field of Waterloo.

An Earthquake's spoil is sepulched below! Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust? Nor column trophied for triumphal show! None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so. As the ground was before, thus let it be.— How that red rain—hath made the harvest grow!

And is this all the world has gain'd by thee, Thou first and last of fields! king-making Vic-

tory?

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry; and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave
men;

A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose, with its voluptious swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind, Or the car rattling o'er the stony street; On with the dance! let joy be unconfined; No sleep till morn, when youth and Pleasure, meet

To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.

Sut hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once

As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!

m! Arm! it is!—it is! the cannon's opening
roar!

Within a widow'd niche of that high hali
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it
near,

His heart more truly knew that peal too well Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier, And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:

rush'd into the field; and, foremost fighting,

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro, And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress, And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness; And there were sudden partings, such as press The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs

Which ne'er might be repeated: who could

f ever more should meet those mutual eyes, ce upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise? And there was mounting in hot haste: the

The mustering squadron, and the clattering car Went pouring forward with impetuous speed. And swiftly forming in the ranks of war; And the deep thunder, peal on peal, afar; And near, the beat of the alarming drum Roused up the soldier ere the morning star; While throng'd the citizens, with terror dumb Or whispering, with white lips—'The fo! they come! they come!

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering

The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills Have heard—and heard too have her Saxor foes:—

How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills, Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills

Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring, which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years;
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,

Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass, Grieving—if aught inanimate e'er grieves—Over the unreturning brave,—alas!

Ere evening to be trodden like the grass, Which now beneath them, but above shall grow

In its next verdure; when this hery mass

Of living valor, rolling on the fo, d burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low!

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay;
The midnight brought the signal-sound of
strife;

The morn the marshalling in arms; the day Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when

rent,

The earth is cover'd thick with other clay, Which her own clay shall cover,—heap'd and pent,

ler and horse,—friend, fo,—in one red burial blent!

Byron.

A Beth Gelert.

And cheerly smiled the morn,
And many a brach, and many a hound,
Attend Llewellyn's horn:

And gave a louder cheer;
Come, Gelert! why art thou the last
Llewellyn's horn to hear?

Oh, where does faithful Gelert roam?

The flower of all his race!

o true, so brave, a lamb at home—

A lion in the chase!

'Twas only at Llewellyn's board
The faithful Gelert fed;
He watch'd, he served, he chèer'd his lord,
And sentinel'd his bed.

In sooth, he was a peerless hound,
The gift of royal John;
But now no Gelert could be found,
And all the chase rode on.

And now, as over rocks and dells

The gallant chidings rise,
All Snowdown's craggy chaos yells,

With many mingled cries.

That day Liewellyn little Joved
The chase of hart or hare,
And scant and small the booty proved,
For Gelert was not there.

Unpleased, Llewellyn homeward hied,
When, near the portal seat,
His truant Gelert he espied,
Bounding his Lord to greet.

But when he gain'd his castle door,
Aghast the chieftain stood;
The hound was smear'd with gouts of gore,
His lips and fangs ran blood!

Unused such looks to meet;

His favourite check'd his joyful guise,
And crouch'd and lick'd his feet.

Onward in haste Llewellyn pass'd

(And on went Gelert too,)
And still, where'er his eyes were cast,
Fresh blood-gouts shock'd his view!

O'erturn'd his infant's bed he found,

The blood-stain'd covert rent,

And, all around, the walls and ground

With recent blood besprent.

He call'd his child—no voice replied;

He search'd—with terror wild;

Blood! blood! he found on every side,

But no where found the child!

Hell-hound! by thee my child's devour'd!

The frantic father cried,

And to the hilt his vengeful sword

He plunged in Gelert's side!

His supplicant, as to earth he fell,

No pity could impart;
But still his Gelert's dying yell,

Pass'd heavy o'er his heart.

Aroused by Gelert's dying yell,
Some slumberer awaken'd nigh;
What words the parent's joy can tell,
To hear his infant cry!

Conceal'd beneath a mangled heap, His hurried search had miss'd, All glowing from his rosy sleep, His cherub boy he kiss'd! Nor scratch had he, nor harm, nor dread—
But the same couch beneath,
Lay a great wolf, all torn and dead—
Tremendous still in death!

Ah! what was then Llewellyn's pain!
For now the truth was clear;
The gallant hound the wolf had slain,
To save Llewellyn's heir.

Vain, vain, was all Llewellyn's wo:
Best of thy kind adieu!
The frantic deed which laid thee low,
This heart shall ever rue!

And now a gallant tomb they raise,
With costly sculpture deck'd;
And marbles, storied with his praise,
Poor Gelert's bones protect.

Or forester, unmoved;
Here oft the tear-besprinkled grass
Llewellyn's sorrow proved.

And here he hung his horn and spear;
And, off as evening fell,
In fancy's piercing sounds would hear
Poor Gelert's dying yell!
Spencer.

III Com to the whole too

FINIS.