

OF THE SCOTTISH TONGUE.

no uncommon thing in England as to
to hear educated men, and even
men, remonstrating against the continu-
of a Scottish literature. "Why," it is
argued, "continue to use a language, and dialect
which must soon become obsolete?"
Well, we answer, it has a charm to us which
we are not willing to sacrifice to utilitarianism.
Practical as the world is, our tastes are happily
not entirely so, and as we cannot live in
the improved ages to come, we prefer holding
fast those ideal things which to us are a joy
forever. The memories of our early days are
yet the morning sunshine of our lives. Where
the kindly heart that has not felt that

There's aye a birglean o' the gude and the true,
we dream the bit dream of our childhood anew,
and what brings this feeling home to a Scot,
at home or abroad—like Scottish writings?
When Tannahill wrote that simple line,
"The midges dance abune the burn,"

we set a living image before thousands of his
countrymen which all the gnats above all the
books in England could never have conveyed
an idea of.

The Scot is notably sicker, but no people so
frequently give up wealthy and desirable positions
to enjoy on a moderate competence their
fondly cherished home associations, nor do
any more readily make sacrifices to attain
cherished ideas. The Highland woman who
asked her gude-man to "gang up and be hanged
to please the Laird," is an exaggerated illustration
of this feeling, while the history of "The
Forty-five" Rebellion showed a national self-
sacrifice probably without a parallel. From
the sage, Lochiel, who foresaw and pointed out
the terrible dangers imminent, yet could not
resist—the wild poetical feeling, swept irresistibly
through the people, who staked all in
their devoted enthusiasm, the world knows
with what results. Yet from that great up-
surge, and the merciless down-tramping
that followed it, what a glorious heritage of
national poetry sprung! We do not say the
people did wisely in linking their fate with that
of the "Young Chevalier," but they were
borne away impulsively by sympathy and love
of right, the noblest impulses that stir the human
heart. So whether it be wise or no, we
feel that there is something grandly loyal in
our enthusiastic love of our mother-tongue.
This much for the ideal.

Yet are we not without reason for the faith
by which we cling, for there are virtues in the
Scottish language well worthy of preservation.
 uttered by rude tongues it may be harsh, but
from modulated lips it is very musical, and we
have often heard people of other nations speak
of the pleasure it gave them. There is a tender
pathos in the dialect, and a fine rhythmic
flow in the strong, simple words, with
their profusion of vowels, to which we proudly
cling. If any one doubts the truth of this let
them read Hogg's "Bonny Kilmeny," and believe;
or Tannahill's "Bonnie Wood o' Craig-
gables," or "Gloomy Winter's now awa";
Burns' "Nannie O," or Robert Nicoll's—

"There's nae like you, there's nae like you,
The youngsters blithe around us now,
Are bonnie a', both great an' sma',
But auld gudewife there's nae like you."

Simple thoughts enough, but tenderly ex-
pressed and touchingly grand in their simple,
homely words.

Willie Laidlaw's "Lucy's Plittin'," is another
fine illustration of the expressive tenderness
of our ve-

"O what is at pits my pair heart in a flutter,
And what are the tear come sae fast to my e'e,
If I was na' fittle to be ony better,
Then wha' gars me wish ony better to be."

"The Braes o' Gleniffer," and "When the
Eye come hame," are equally beautiful. How
that verse beginning "When the huart bears
a pearl," takes hold of the Scottish heart, and
where is the Scot whose ambition would not
be fired to write the same tongue if he dared
hope to write as musically. The first four
verses of Miss Blamire's "What ails this heart
o' mine," Lady Ann Lindsay's "Auld Robin
Gray," the Countess of Nairn's "I'm wearin'
awa," "The Rowan Tree," and many others,
have excellencies and beauties enough to stim-
ulate the Scotch to follow in such footsteps for
generations to come.

Nor does the Scottish muse of modern days
lag far behind. Henry Scott Riddell's "Scot-
land Yet," "I'll awa hame to my ain folk," and
other pieces, are worthy of her palmiest days.
W. Cameron's "Meet me on the Gowan Lea,"
"Jessie o' the Dell," and "Morag's Faery
Glen,"—

"Ye ken whar you, wee burnie rins roarin' to the
sea,"—
are brimming with gladness and beauty as the
birds and the burnies themselves.

Many of the Scottish idioms are very ex-
pressive, and there is a pith in the language, as
there has always been in the race which uses
it. Take for example Burns' "Address to the
Deil," "Tam o' Shanter," or "Death and Dr.
Hornbook," or Nicoll's "We'll mak' the warld
better yet."

There are not a few useful Scottish words
which have no English synonym, while many
are indifferently represented. "Wersh" can-
not be expressed in English; its best repre-
sentative is sallow, but this is a thoroughly
negative condition, whilst wersh is a very posi-
tive flavor, as every one who tastes unsalted
bread or brose is apt to testify. "Douse" ex-
presses at once a pleasant and tranquil dispo-
sition, with a well-conditioned body. "Crouse"
is nearly untranslatable; it is conceited,
sprightly, and inclined to brag. "Dinnie,"
the painful sensation caused by the return of
warm blood to very cold fingers. Who knows
the English of it? Is it tingle? How indefi-
nite, while dinnie or dinnin expresses the exact
feeling, sharp as the sensation itself. "Toom"
is empty, but specially applicable to wooden
vessels, the word itself being the very echo of
an empty barrel. "Braw" is better than any
word we know to represent it. "Bonnie" is
better than pretty, and not always so much as
beautiful, commonly denoting kindness of
countenance, with beauty, when applied to
living things. "Blithe," this Saxon word
may be claimed as thoroughly Scotch, the Eng-
lish having neglected it. It has no equal in its
place, as Scotch authors have well proved.
"Threepit" expresses enforcing as well as
maintaining, and is very pithy. "Birkie." In
a Burns' Glossary we have seen this inter-
preted "a clever fellow." Had Burns with
a Highland gill in his cheek "caught this gomoral
at his translation, what a lounding the cuif
had got. A "birkie" is a proud upsetting fel-
low, more guilty of lack of brains than their
possession. We all know how finely sarcastic
it is. "D'ye see you birkie ca'd a Lord."
"Leal" is the very essence of loyal affection,
and a word of rare merit. "Biel" is a shelter
from the wind, and a very expressive word.
"Pawky" may be rendered artful, dodging;
we know no better. It is full of meaning,
generally implying humorous cunning. "Eerie."
Whoever in a dark and lonely place has felt
a vague, undefined dread, a creepiness of
the hair, though not really in fear, has been eerie.
The feeling is well-known, but not expressible
in English. "Glamour." Let him who knows
the English of this explain it. The "evil eye"
of the gipsy and the killing glance of the lover
possess it. "Gleg" is quick, sharp and ac-
tive, concentrated. "Gowk" is a simple, fool-
ish person; goose is the only translation.
"Kep" is neither catches nor receives, but
both. How perfectly poetical is the proverb
"Ilka blade o' grass keeps its ain drap o' dew."
"Gawkie" is a thoughtless and awkward las-
sie or woman. "Gowpin," as much as can be
lifted in both hands placed together. "Gau-
cie" is at once handsome, sprightly, and of
ample proportions. There are scores of such
words which might be quoted. Where shall
we find haflets for an Englishman, or a word
to make him mensfu'; how set him hotchin'
by a cozic ingle, or rinnin' pechin' up a brae,
which is not a hill. While others dodge we
will jouk; they may be big and sturdy fellows,
we can set against them strappin', buirdly
chiel. They dinna ken our grips and clours
and cowps for carles "dour an' dia," nor how
we can daud and dirl the croons o' Dae-nae-
guids and gar them sough and swither. aye,
and wauble as feckless as a tewed and wuzzent
runch. As little ken they what a cantie bit
bodie auld Grannie is, or how she loes to tent
the toddin' weans. They may court their gen-
tle girls on pretty hillocks or vales; we'll woo
our canny lassies on the bonnie knaws or in
the bieldy howes; while their children go to
pluck the pretty daisies, ours'll gang to "pu-
the gowans fine"; while brooks ripple between
their flowery banks, burns shall wimple by the
broomie braes where goslins cheep, and linties
chirl, and laverocks flitting sing. What Scot
would not prefer a brumel to a brambleberry;
or a hine to a rasp (the mention of which
might set one's teeth on edge instead of a-
watering); or gloaming to twilight; or a
scur to a precipice, which might be a hin; or
guldwife to good wife; or lowe to flame, which
is also bleeze; or agley to crooked, which is
different; or birr, or eidont, or couthie, or
vauntie, or rowth, or gear, or girn, or glower,
or Laird, or Bailie, to any corresponding Eng-
lish, and there are many other words equally
expressive.

it is easy, however, to have too much of a
good thing, and Scotticized Scotch is as un-
palatable to a Scot as would be an over-stuffed
haggis. Hately Waddell's version of the
twenty-third Psalm is sadly overdone. The
man who renders drookit for anoint might
as blins dook till he dreeps in a Liddisdale dowie
and be nae the dafter for it.

Though "old times" or "long ago" can
never be taken as an equivalent for "Auld
Lang Syne," the Scotch have long been cog-
nizant of and adopted many of the excellen-
cies of the English language, and we are quite
willing to play a give-and-take game. Let
England and Scotland unite in language, as
they did in government. We shall not even
insist upon kinging them this time as at the
last union, but will meet them and treat them
frankly as though they were our very equals.
If England is not sufficiently enlightened for
this, Scotland can well afford to wait, resting
on her dignity, and great as is her penur-
ousness (she has long been a thrifty banker),
from her overflowing wealth so carefully gar-
nered she will continue to send her sons, as
she has done for ages past, to beautify and
enrich English literature in all its branches,
and the world shall be glad, led by her
bounty.

But as an Arab after offering his favorite
steed for sale begins ruefully thinking over
its many good qualities, so do we of our Scot-
tish muse. A verse of John Imlah's song,
"There lives a young lassie far down in yon
glen," springs to our lips:

"Red, red as the rowan her smiling was mou,
And white as the gowan her breast and her brow,
Wi' the foot of a fairy she links ower the heath,
Ah! weel I loe Mary, and Mary loe me."
And while that music floats through our brain
we swither about the agreement rashly pro-
posed, and really don't think Scotland could
ever afford to give up her native Doric. Life
without it would not be worth having.

J. H. P.

Abraham 186

60 26
20 7
56 01

without the written consent of the University Archivist
the use of this copy is assumed by the recipient. Further reproduction
in any other institution cannot be made