

## Tales and Sketches.

## OUR AIN COUNTRIE.

BY ELLA GUERNSEY.

On the afternoon of a December day, little Walter Graham lay pillowed in mamma's lap, his life ebbing fast way. The malignant croup, that dread disease, that cuts short so many little ones, and is the terror of all loving mothers, held Willie fast, and tightened its cruel fingers upon Willie's throat, until mamma almost prayed death to claim her darling.

Only a little time since the little feet, encased in his first boots, had made noisy, but sweet music to mamma's ear, the firm, red cheeks glowed with health, and in a few hours the summons had come for Wallie, the pride and hope of the Graham household.

After a terrible effort to breathe easier, he gasped. "Sing, please, mamma."

Now, mamma knew just what her boy wanted to hear, as no old Christian Scot loved the hymn "My Ain Countrie," more than her boy, but how could the sore, stricken mother sing when she wanted to wail, but she began in a queer, shaky voice:

I'm far frae my hame an' I'm weary aftenwhiles,  
For the langd for hame bringing an' my father's smiles,  
I'll ne'er be fre' content—"

Here a sob smothered the melody, for she knew Wallie was not far frae his ain countrie. Papa took up the words:

"I've his gude word of promise that some gladsome day the King  
To his ain royal palace his banished hame will bring—"

But he, too, broke down, and Aunt Esther softly sang,  
"His bluid hath made me white an' his hand shall dry my ain  
When he brings me hame at last to my ain countrie."

Wallie's breathing was now easier, his head dropped lower, his pulse fluttered feebly, he tried to smile even in his pain.

Then the aged minister, who had known mamma in her girl days, sung in his high tremulous voice:

"Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,  
I wad fain noo be gangin' unto my Saviour's breast,  
For he gathers in his bosom even witless lambs like me,  
An' carries them himself to his ain countrie."

Wallie's head sank lower, he lay still, so very still and then we knew he had gone to his ain countrie.

One day she wept as before, and said to the old nurse, "My boy was too sweet and pretty to be hidden under ground."

"He isn't too pretty for where he's gone," said Aunt Hepsy.

Instantly came the new thought and with it comfort.

No, thank God, he was not too pretty for where he was gone, where eye hath not seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived what God hath prepared for those who love. The ignorant servant had done what friends refined and cultured had not—given comfort to the sore heart.

In a quiet country cemetery, where the myrtle grows in profusion, the starry blue flowered, glossy green-leaved myrtle conceals all that is unsightly, and the stately cedars that remind us of the cedars of Lebanon, make the sweet, weird music peculiar to the pine and cedar when soft winds sounds the notes, grand and full or faint and sweet, and among their boughs sweet singing birds build their homes. A small grassy mound, marked by a marble shaft tells us that Walter sleeps there.

We loved the lad, and miss the merry shout, and tramp of the noisy feet, and with the young mother, think of the dainty waxen form, as last we saw it, in its dainty satin-lined casket, and our eyes ache to see him again in his fleshy form, then we think of the pure, white soul that has been "carried in his bosom to our ain countrie," and we know it is well with the child.

"God gie his grace to ilk ane wha listens noo to me,  
That we a' may gang in gladness to our ain countrie."

Toledo Blade.

## APPETITE.

No man ever drank rum with a prayer to Jesus on his lips. A great many claim to have the appetite removed. If you ask me if I have, I will answer, I don't know. Desire is all gone, but I don't know if the appetite is or not, and I *won't* know! Heaven helping me, I will never find out, for the only way to test it is to *take a drink*, and I advise you not to *try it*. I don't know what appetite is. It is a mysterious something we can't explain. Colonel Blank was a periodical drunkard; he would have a spree and then for a long time let it alone; then his shoulders would begin to twitch and jump, and his friends knew the appetite was coming on, and he would go off on a lengthened spree again. Finally he became a Christian and everyone rejoiced with his careful walk and consistent life.

He united with the church, and on a certain Sunday was to take his first communion. A friend was talking to one of the deacon's on the day before the communion service, and spoke of the Colonel's conversion.

"Yes," replied the church officer, "he is to commune with us to day for the first time."

"Where do you get your wine for sacramental purposes, deacon?"

"Oh, at any of the stores."

"What! exclaimed the questioner, starting back aghast, "you don't mean to tell me you use the wine of commerce, the alcoholic, intoxicating wine, do you?"

"Why, yes; what harm?"

"I would not dare to do it; for God's sake, don't let the Colonel have the cup to-day with that wine; pass him by *any way*, but don't let him touch his lips to it."

"Oh," replied the deacon, "the Colonel's a christian now, it won't hurt him."

The hour for the administration came, and the Colonel was there with the rest; grateful friends were made happy with the sight, as he bowed there with tearful eyes for the first time in his life. The cup was passed and the Colonel's turn came to taste the wine. He raised his head slowly, touched the cup with his hand and raised it reverently to his lips, tasting it, and started like a man affrighted, quivering from head to foot a half-second, and then clutching the glass, drew it fiercely to his mouth; they tried to tear it away, but in vain; nor would he release his hold in spite of all their efforts till the glass was about empty. Before night he was drunk, and in ten days was dead! He died in fearful torment! The appetite was not dead but slumbering. — *John B. Gough.*

## Our Casket.

## JEWELS.

What we sow  
Will surely grow,  
Though the harvest may be slow!

All common things, each day's events,  
That with the hour begin and end,  
Our pleasures and our discontents  
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

Our lives are songs: God writes the words,  
And we set them to music at pleasure;  
And the songs grow glad, or sweet or sad,  
As we choose to fashion the measure  
We must write the music, whatever the song  
Whatever its rhymes or metre,  
And if it be sad we can make it glad,  
Or if sweet we can make it sweeter.

*Life, like the waters of the sea, freshens only when it ascends towards heaven.*

Honor is like the eye which cannot suffer the least impurity without damage; it is a precious stone, the price of which is lessened by the least flaw.

The life of man consists not in seeing visions and in dreaming dreams, but in active charity and willing service.

Polished steel will not shine in the dark, no more can reason, however refined and cultivated, shine efficaciously, but as it reflects the light of divine truth shed from heaven.

Men seldom die of hard work, activity is God's medicine. The highest genius is willingness and ability to do hard work. Any other conception of genius makes it a doubtful, if not a dangerous, possession.

The maelstrom attracts more notice than the quiet fountain, a comet draws more attention than the steady star; but it is better to be the fountain than the maelstrom, and star than comet, following out the sphere and orbit of quiet usefulness in which God places us.

Never be sorry for any generous thing that you ever did, even if it was betrayed. Never be sorry that you were magnanimous if the person was mean afterward. Never be sorry that you gave; it was right for you to give, even if you were imposed upon. You cannot afford to keep on the safe side by being mean.

A minister collecting for a chapel once called on a wealthy merchant who gave him fifty pounds. As the good man was going out with eyes sparkling with delight, the merchant received a letter. He read it and said to the minister, "Stop, I have lost a ship worth about six thousands pounds. Let me have the fifty pound cheque for a moment." The poor minister trembled lest it would not be returned. Instead of that he wrote another and gave it to him for five hundred pounds, saying: "As my money is going so fast, it is well to make some of it sure in God's bank."