

**SONGS AND
BALLADS OF
CLYDESDALE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649708147

Songs and Ballads of Clydesdale by A. Nimmo

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A. NIMMO

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OF

CLYDESDALE.

With Illustrative Notes

By A. NIMMO.

EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW: JOHN MENZIES & CO.

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To Adelaide Mary Bertram of Kersewell, Carnwath.

MADAM,

It is not that my grandfather was an old tenant of the Kersewell family ; it is not that my father was Quarter-Master in the Regiment of Cavalry commanded by the late Col. Bertram of Kersewell, and who, on returning with his comrade, Sergeant Martin, had the interesting and memorable interview with Jean Armour at the grave of Burns, as related by Gilfillan in his account of the Poet.

The deep interest you have long taken in the religious instruction of the young, and the warm sympathy you have shown for the unfortunate, the old and the imbecile, in being mainly instrumental in supporting for such a lengthened period the soup kitchen for their comfort, certainly entitles you to the gratitude of the recipients, and the public respect.

For these reasons, Madam, I take the liberty of most respectfully dedicating this volume to you, a trifling compliment, no doubt, but I had nothing better to offer.

With warmest wishes for prosperity and happiness to Mr. Bertram, yourself, and your interesting family,

I remain, MADAM,

Your much obliged and most obedient

A. NIMMO.

CARNWATH, May, 1882.

P.S.—It is another striking instance of the awful uncertainty of human life, that after the above lines of dedication were not only written but printed, Mrs. Bertram had an attack of illness on Thursday, the 25th of May, 1882, which closed her valuable life in a few hours. Mrs. Bertram was the daughter of John Bateman, Esq. This gentleman, many years ago, hired a small vessel at Tasmania to carry him and his two daughters to Australia ; and these three, we believe, were the first settlers in Victoria, and thus in a sense may be said to have laid the foundations of what will yet be a great and flourishing empire.

June, 1887.

A. N.

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PREFACE.

PERHAPS no man in the wide region of Upper Strathclyde was more universally esteemed than the late Adam Sim, Esq., of Coulter Maynes. It is a curious circumstance, that it was only at a very *early* and a rather *late* period of our lives that we had any friendly intercourse. When a boy residing with his grandfather, Mr. John Stodart, farmer, Bank, Carnwath, I was one of the herds, and on the most intimate and familiar terms with young Mr. Sim. Even then he was beginning to show some of those traits for which he afterwards became so remarkable. The rhymes and traditions of the district, especially those respecting Wallace and the Covenanters, interested him deeply, and the finding of a small bronze figure of a pig, in a marsh at the foot of the Bank Brae, was the incident which first awakened in his mind a taste for antiquities—a taste which “grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength,” until it culminated in that extraordinary collection at Coulter Maynes, which, for a private collection, I believe, was second only to that of Abbotsford. After the days of boyhood our course in life was widely divergent, but a few years before he died I received an invitation to visit him, and was most kindly received. In the course of our intercourse, he suggested that I should make a collection of “The Songs and Ballads of Clydesdale,” and he would have them published. After I had a goodly number collected, his sudden death put an end, to that speculation as far as he was concerned.

There are many very excellent people, who ridicule the

idea of any good being produced by songs, yet one distinguished statesman, who knew human nature well, said he did not care who made the laws if he could get the making of the songs. In this collection I have paid due attention to the lays of the Covenanters. Many people think them fools, rogues, or hypocrites, with no taste for literature, yet Cleland, one of the best poets in Scotland at the time, assisted to hunt the brave hero Claverhouse from Drunclog, and with the single regiment of Covenanters repulsed and defeated the repeated attacks of an army of 5,000 Highlanders at Dunkeld. All they fought for was a free parliament and a free assembly. And it is a curious fact, that the bulk of our best song writers are either natives, or intimately associated with the land of the Covenant. I need only mention Ramsay, Burns, Tannahill, Campbell, Joanna Baillie, Henry S. Riddell, &c., &c. Clydesdale is a Covenanted district.

The present collection, instead of a compilation of the songs of these writers, is rather meant to show the state of the Scottish lyre, in past and present times, among the people of Clydesdale.

A few pieces are included which, although not written by natives, are favourites in the district.

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