

**IN THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE:
A SERIES OF SKETCHES OF
FORFARSHIRE
CHARACTERS**

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In the By-Ways of Life: A Series of Sketches of Forfarshire Characters by J. S. Neish

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J. S. NEISH

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IN THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE:
A SERIES OF SKETCHES
OF
FORFARSHIRE CHARACTERS.

BY

J. S. NEISH,

AUTHOR OF "REMINISCENCES OF BRECHIN AND ITS CHARACTERS,"
"WANDERING WATTLE," "ROTTEN AT THE CORE,"
AND OTHER TALKS AND SKETCHES.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The success which attended the publication of the "Reminiscences of Brechin and its Characters" has induced the Author to offer another volume of Character Sketches to the public. The present Papers, like the former, were originally written for the *Weekly News*. They embrace a wider locality, however, and solicit the suffrages of a more extended constituency. The Characters sketched were real personages, and all well known in the localities where they lived. Some of them were personally known to the writer, and they all obtained a certain degree of local celebrity by their pawky sayings and eccentric habits. Numerous anecdotes regarding their peculiar traits of character still float about in oral tradition, and some of these, in various forms, have already found their way into print. In preparing the Sketches the Author has utilised all the information he could collect to enable him to present the reader with faithful and realistic portraits of the characters he has attempted to delineate.

Curiosities of human character are only to be met with in the "by-ways of life." In the ordinary walks of life men appear not what they are by nature, but what society and education have made them. The bustle and activity which characterise society now-a-days leave men little leisure and less inclination to seek amusement in observing the peculiarities of

eccentric individuals. Such characters are therefore becoming more rare than formerly ; not that they are no longer to be met with, but because less attention is now directed towards them. The subjects treated of in these pages belong to the past, and to a state of society that has almost ceased to exist. The customs and habits of the people have changed considerably during the last half century, and glimpses of life and manners of former days will be met with in the Sketches. If, therefore, the perusal of the volume may recall pleasant memories of bygone days to some, and afford them and other readers as well a little amusement, the Author will be satisfied that he has not laboured in vain.

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IN THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE.

HUMOROUS TRAITS OF A DUNDEE BELLMAN.

BETWEEN thirty and forty years ago Joseph Dempster held the office of Bellman and Town Crier in Bonnie Dundee. Joseph was a universal favourite with all classes in the town. He was one of those good-humoured sort of persons who are never unhappy themselves, and who by their flow of spirits and lively wit serve to keep those around them on the "broad grin" at their drolleries and pawky sayings and doings. No matter under what circumstances Joseph's lot was cast, he never lost his temper, or got downcast in the midst of adversity, and he, poor man, had his own share of that during his checkered career. Few men had so many ups and downs as Joseph, but no position in which he was placed could break his spirit, or quench the fire of wit and humour which glowed within him.

He was born in Edinburgh, where he learned the trade of a shoemaker, and afterwards commenced business on his own account in his native city. For several years he had an excellent business, and occupied a respectable position in "Modern Athens." But misfortune came over him, and his business in Edinburgh was wound up for behoof of his creditors.