

ENGLAND IN TIME OF WAR

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England in time of war by Sydney Thompson Dobell

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SYDNEY THOMPSON DOBELL

**ENGLAND IN
TIME OF WAR**

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BY

SYDNEY DOBELL,

AUTHOR OF "BALDER," AND "THE ROMAN."

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ENGLAND

IS

TIME OF WAR.

DESOLATE.

From the sad eaves the drip-drop of the rain !
The water washing at the latchel door ;
A slow step plashing by upon the moor ;
A single bleat far from the famished fold ;
The clicking of an embered hearth and cold ;
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

“ So as it is with thee
Is it with me,
So as it is and it used not to be,
With thee used not to be,
Nor me.”

So singeth Robin on the willow tree,
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

Here in this breast all day
The fire is dim and low,
Within I care not to stay,
Without I care not to go.

A sadness ever sings
Of unforgotten things,
And the bird of love is patting at the pane;
But the wintry water deepens at the door,
And a step is plashing by upon the moor
Into the dark upon the darkening moor,
And alas, alas, the drip-drop of the rain!

THE MARKET-WIFE'S SONG.*

THE butter an' the cheese weel stowit they be,
 I sit on the hen-coop the eggs on my knee,
 The lang kail jigs as we jog owre the rigs,
 The gray mare's tail it wags wi' the kail,
 The warm simmer sky is blue aboon a',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I sit on the coop, I look straight before,
 But my heart it is awa' the braid ocean owre,
 I see the bluidy fiel' where my ain bonny chief',
 My wee bairn o' a', gaed to fight or to ia',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I see the gran' toun o' the big forrin' loun,
 I hear the cannon soun', I see the reek aboon ;
 It may be lang John lettin' aff his gun,
 It may be the mist—your mither disna wist—
 It may be the kirk, it may be the ha',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

* In several of the Scottish songs of this volume, the author wishes, notwithstanding whatever *couleur locale* they may possess, to be understood as speaking rather for a class than a locality. As most of the English provincial dialects are poetically objectionable, and are modifications of tongues which exist more purely in the "Lallans" of Scotland, it seemed to him that when expressing the general peasant life of the empire he might employ the central truth of that noble Doric which is at once rustic and dignified, heroic and vernacular.

An' I ken the Black Sea, ayont the rock o' dool,
 Like a muckle blot o' ink in a buik fra' the schule,
 An' Jock! it gars me min' o' your buikies lang syne,
 An' mindin' o' it a' the tears begin to fa',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then a bull roars fra' the scaur, ilka rock 's a bull agen,
 An' I hear the trump o' war, an' the carse is fu' o' men,
 Up an' down the morn I ken the bugle horn,
 Ilka birdie sma' is a fleecin' cannon ba',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Guid Heavens! the Russian host! We maun e'en gie up for
 lost!

Gin ye gain the battle hae ye countit a' the cost?
 Ye may win a gran' name, but wad wee Jock come hame?
 Dinna fecht, dinna fecht! there 's room for us a',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

In vain, in vain, in vain! They are marchin' near and far!
 Wi' swords an' wi' slings an' wi' instruments o' war!
 Oh, day sae dark an' sair! ilka man seven feet an' mair!
 I bow my head an' say, "Gin the Lord wad smite them a'!"
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then forth fra' their ban' there steps an armed man,
 His taarge at his breast an' his claymore in his han',
 His gowd pow glitters fine an' his shadow fa's behin',
 I think o' great Goliath as he stan's before them a',
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.