

ROBERT MENNON.

1797-1885.

ROBERT MENNON, familiarly known as the "Ayton Bard," was born on the 29th April, 1797, at Ayton, where his father followed the occupation of village slater and glazier. After a meagre education at the parish school young Mennon proceeded in 1824 to London, where he made his home for twenty-six years. In 1828 he married Sarah Bridges, who had been a domestic servant with his employer. The union lasted for forty-eight years, her death taking place at Ayton in 1876. In 1850 Mennon returned to Scotland, and commenced business for himself at Dunbar. After nineteen successful years he retired and settled in his native village, where he died on the 30th January, 1885, in the same house in which he had been born eighty-seven years before.

Robert Mennon began in early life to cultivate the writing of verse, and in 1869 he issued a massive collection of his effusions with the title of "Poems, Moral and Religious," which had a wide circulation. He was a man of genuine piety, a keen observer of nature, of a lively and cheerful disposition, racy and good-humoured in conversation, a most agreeable companion, full of sage counsel and kindly, warm-hearted encouragement. His poetical productions are not of the highest merit, but they are generally pleasing, and show the writer to have been a

man of refined feeling, and a good example of an honest, God-fearing, and patriotic Scot.

CHIRNSIDE.

On yon hillside where sunbeams play,
Where health and happiness reside,
With dwellings meek and mansions gay,
Stands cheerful, smiling Chirnside.

In bygone years, while yet a boy,
Its landscape fair I viewed with pride ;
The fruitful Merse I hail'd with joy
As seen from lofty Chirnside.

Fam'd Berwickshire, from east to west,
Spreads out its treasures far and wide,
Till Cheviot Hills, with verdure dress'd,
Seem in the clouds, from Chirnside !

The scene of Flodden Field I trace,
By blood of noble heroes dyed ;
And mark the course of Chevy Chase,
From vantage ground of Chirnside.

The famous Tweed rolls gaily on
Past castles, erst the foe defied,
Whose ruins tell their glory's gone,
As seen afar from Chirnside.

What anxious mothers here have stood—
What new-made widows here have sighed,
While gazing on the Border feud
Down in the vale, from Chirnside !

But better days we witness now,
Which claim our thanks and rouse our pride ;
Our peasants whistle at the plough,
A railway passes Chirnside.

When time admits and weather's fair,
I'll on that railway take a ride,
Review afresh these beauties rare,
And spend a day at Chirnside.

THE LILY O' THE VALLEY.

Doun in a vale begirt wi' trees,
 Where birds sing late an' early,
 Where dewy flowers attract the bees,
 An' sunbeams sparkle rarely.
 A cottage, frae the world exiled,
 Stands by a burn so gaily,
 Where lives a lass the muse has styled
 The Lily o' the Valley.

Her cheek is like the lovely rose,
 Soft blended wi' the lily,
 Her hair in wanton ringlets flows,
 She's slender as the willow.
 She pure is as the snaw at morn,
 When frosts are keen an' chilly,
 Gay as the birdie on yon thorn—
 Sweet Lily o' the Valley.

Her aged mither, a' her care,
 She helps wi' hand right tender,
 An' vows wi' words an' heart sincere
 In troubles to defend her.
 On a moss seat beside the door
 She plies her labour daily,
 An' gaily sings, in Nature's lore—
 The Lily o' the Valley.

When Phœbus sinks beyont the hills,
 An' trees o'ershade the fountain,
 When echo haunts the mossy rills,
 An' twilight gilds the mountain,
 I aft a leisure hour beguile
 Where innocence dwells really,
 An' count it bliss to share her smile—
 The Lily o' the Valley.

O may the rude, unfeeling heart
 Ne'er nip her tender blossom,
 Nor cruel guilt's relentless dart
 E'er fester in her bosom!

Where'er I wander, far or near,
 Or dowie be or gaily,
 To me she ever will be dear—
 The Lily o' the Valley!

JUKE AN' LET THE JAW GAE BY.

As musin' on the days o' youth,
 When impulse leads us aft astray,
 Experience tells the precious truth—
 'Twas best when reason bore the sway.
 I mind, when bathin' on the shore,
 When swellin' waves cam' boundin' high,
 Their threat'ning wrath was quickly o'er—
 We juked an' let the jaw gae by.

So I hae aften found since then,
 When cares cam' like a ragin' sea,
 To calm my mind an' ease my pain,
 Was patiently to bend a wee.
 For aft I've warsled lang an' sair
 To mak' contrary things comply ;
 But proved it best, beyond compare,
 To juke an' let the jaw gae by.

Oh ! if this maxim were oor guide,
 This world wad be a heaven below—
 'Twad banish envy, strife, an' pride,
 An' kill oppression at a blow.
 Nations an' tongues wad live in peace—
 War wi' its dreadfu' horrors fly ;
 Friendships endure, an' law pleas cease—
 Just juke an' let the jaw gae by.

An' sure 'twad bring its ain reward—
 What ills we'd shun, what cares we'd miss ;
 The stubborn will—the heart that's hard—
 Can ne'er enjoy the sweets of bliss.
 An' when at peace wi' a' mankind,
 We calmly lay us down to die ;
 'Twill help to aid our fleeting mind
 To juke an' let the jaw gae by.