

Mother

Ye were ay a rowdy laddie, Jock,
Since ever ye cam hame,
Unco ill to bed at night,
And dour to wash and kaim.
It gave me many a he'rt-break,
To keep ye cosh and clean,
Now I'm he'rt-hale sorry for't –
Ye ken what I mean!

Your brither's deid in New Chapelle,
Your faither's in Kirkbride,
Ye're a' that's left that made for me
The joy o' Wanlochside.
I winna hae ye craven, mind,
Nor yet ower foolish keen,
Let caution gang wi' courage, lad –
Ye ken what I mean!

If ever ye come on a German chiel
That looks o' landward breed,
Some harum-scarum ne'er-dae-weel,
Blae een and lint-white heid,
That maybe played on the hairst-field
Like you when he was a wean,
Let that yin by for his mither's sake –
Ye ken what I mean!

Nane yet got me repinin',
Nor bendin' to my load;
High heid in the market-toun,
Licht foot on the road!
There's nane to see Jean Cameron boo
But by her bed at e'en,
And I trust you're no forgettin' –
Ye ken what I mean!

I'm vexed noo when I think of it,
The way I let ye gang –
Just the wee clap on the shouter,
And nae fareweel harangue;
I couldna look ye in the face,
For the sun was in my een,
I'm a stupid auld Scots body –
Ye ken what I mean!

If Death were but a merchant man,
To strike a bargain wi',
The first at his booth in the Candleriggs
In the morn's morn would be me,
To swap him a fine auld withered brench
For a stubborn twig o' green –
But there! I'm only haverin' –
Ye ken what I mean!

Neil Munro



Jock, to the First Army

O Rab an' Dave an' rantin' Jim,
The geans were turnin' reid
When Scotland saw yer line grow dim,
Wi' the pipers at its heid;
Noo, i' yon warld we dinna ken,
Like strangers ye maun gang—
*'We've sic a wale o' Angus men
That we canna weary lang'*

An' little Wat — my brither Wat —
Man, are ye aye the same?
Or is yon sma' white hoose forgot
Doon by the strath at hame?
An' div ye mind foo aft we trod
The Isla's banks before ?—
*—'My place is wi' the Hosts o' God,
But I mind me o' Strathmore'*

It's deith comes skirlin' through the sky,
Below there's nocht but pain,
We canna see whaur deid men lie
For the drivin' o' the rain;
Ye a' hae passed frae fear an' doot,
Ye're far frae airthly ill —
*—'We're near, we're here, my wee recruit,
An' we fecht for Scotland still.'*

Violet Jacob

Any Private to Any Private

July 1917

(The speaker pointed out that owing to the number of young married men who were being killed,

widows were becoming a great burden to the State. – Daily Paper.)

(Our boys are wonderful. They are always able to laugh. – Daily Paper.)

Ay, gie's ma rum. I'm needin't sair, by God!
We've juist been bringin' Wullie doun the line –
Wullie, that used tae be sae smairt an' snod.
Hell! what a mess! Saft-nosed ane. Damn the swine!
They micht kill clean. I kent his auld fouk fine.
Ay, he was mairrit. Man, she's spared a sicht.
Here, Dave, gie's ower that blanket. Ay, that's mine.
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

We gaed tae Tamson's schule. A clever loon
Was Wullie. He was makin' money tae.
A'body liked him round about the toun.
Fitba'? Losh, ay! He was a de'il tae play.
We joined thegither for a bob a day;
An' noo he's deid. Here, Davie, gie's a licht.
They'll pit it in the papers. Weel they may!
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

I canna mak' it oot. It fair beats a',
That Wullie has tae dee for God kens what.
An' Wullie's wife'll get a bob or twa,



Aifter they interfere wi' what she's got .
They'll pester her, and crack a dagoned lot;
An' Heaven kens, they'll lave her awfu' ticht.
"A burden to the State." Her Wullie's shot.
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

Envoi

What's that? Anither workin' pairtie, noo,
At six? Ay, sergeant, I'll be there a' richt.
Weel, Wullie lad, they winna wauken you.
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

J. B. Salmond

Remembrance Day

Some one was singing
 Up a twisty stair,
A fragment of a song,
 One sweet, spring day,
When twelve o'clock was ringing,
 Through the sunny square –

*'There was a lad baith frank and free,
Cam' doon the bonnie banks o' Dee
Wi' tartan plaid and buckled shoon,
An' he'll come nae mair to oor toon.'* –

*'He dwells within a far countrie,
Where great ones do him courtesie,
They've gien him a golden croon,
An' he'll come nae mair to oor toon.'* –

No one is singing
 Up the twisty stair.
Quiet as a sacrament
 The November day.



Can't you hear it swinging,
 The little ghostly air?-
Hear it sadly stray
 Through the misty square,
In and out a doorway,
 Up a twisty stair –
Tartan plaid and buckled shoon,
He'll come nae mair to oor toon.

Marion Angus

The Soldiers' Cairn

Gie me a hill wi' the heather on't,
An' a reid sun drappin' doon,
Or the mists o' the mornin' risin' saft
Wi' the reek owre a wee grey toon.
Gie me a howe by the lang Glen road,
For it's there 'mang the whin and fern
(D'ye mind on't, Will? Are ye hearin', Dod?)
That we're biggin' the Soldiers' Cairn.

Far awa' is the Flanders land
Wi' fremmit France atween,
But mony a howe o' them baith the day
Has a hap o' the Gordon green.
It's them we kent that's lyin' there,
An' it's nae wi' stane or airn
But wi' brakin' herts, an' mem'ries sair,
That we're biggin' the Soldiers' Cairn.

Doon, laich doon the Dullan sings—
An' I ken o' an aul' sauch tree,
Where a wee loon's wahnies hingin' yet
That's dead in Picardy;
An' ilka win' fae the Conval's broo
Bends aye the buss o' ern,
Where aince he futtled a name that noo
I'll read on the Soldiers' Cairn.

Oh! build it fine and build it fair,
Till it leaps to the moorland sky —
More, more than death is symbolled there,
Than tears or triumphs by.
There's the Dream Divine of a starward way
Our laggard feet would learn—
It's a new earth's corner-stone we'd lay
As we fashion the Soldiers' Cairn.

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Lads in your plaidies lyin' still
In lands we'll never see,
This lanely cairn on a hameland hill
Is a' that oor love can dee;
An' fine an' braw we'll mak' it a',
But oh, my Bairn, my Bairn,
It's a cradle's croon that'll aye blaw doon
To me fae the Soldiers' Cairn.

Mary Symon