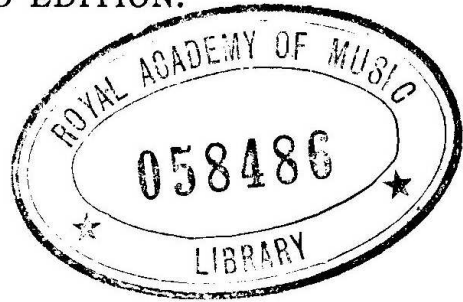


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NOVELLO'S ORIGINAL OCTAVO EDITION.



THE

COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

A POEM

BY

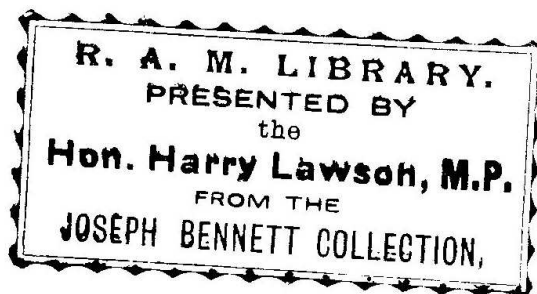
ROBERT BURNS

SET TO MUSIC FOR CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA BY

A. C. MACKENZIE.

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THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sigh¹;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their
repose:

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
This night his weekly toil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
hameward bend.

At length his lonely Cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
The expectant wee-things, toddlan, stacher²
through

To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise and
glee.

His wee-bit ingle, blinkan bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty Wifie's
smile,

The lispin infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his
toil.

Belyve,³ the elder bairns come drapping in,
At Service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie⁴ rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, Love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new
gown,

Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her Parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers⁵:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;

Each tells the uncoss⁶ that he sees or hears.
The Parents partial eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;

The Mother, wi' her needle and her sheers,
Gars' auld claes look amais^t as weel's the new;
The Father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their Master's and their Mistress's command,
The youngkers a' are warn'd to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent⁸ hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk⁹ or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duely, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright."

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily Mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
With heart-struck, anxious care enquires his
name,

While Jenny hafflins¹⁰ is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the Mother hears, it's nae wild,
worthless Rake.

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;¹¹
A strappan youth; he takes the Mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The Father cracks¹² of horses, pleughs,
and kye.¹³

The Youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate¹⁴ and laithfu',¹⁵ scarce can weel
behave;

The Mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae
grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like
the lave.¹⁶

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage Experience bids me this declare—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy Vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest Pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale."

.

But now the Supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome Porritch, chief of Scotia's food:
The soupe¹⁷ their only hawkie¹⁸ does afford,
That 'yont¹⁹ the hallan²⁰ snugly chows her
cood:

The Dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd²¹ kebbuck,²²
fell,²³

And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal Wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond²⁴ auld, sin' Lint was i'
the bell.²⁵

The chearfu' Supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The Sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his Father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets²⁶ wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales²⁷ a portion with judicious care;
"And let us worship God!" he says with
solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise!
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
aim:

Perhaps *Dundee's* wild warbling measure's rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin* beets²⁸ the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like Father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the Friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage,
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lye,
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other Holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian Volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on Earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped;
The Precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd
by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The Saint, the Father, and the Husband
prays:

Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal
sphere.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling Cottagers retire to rest:
The Parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His Wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with Grace divine
preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur
springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noble work of God!"

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
content!

¹ *Sugh*, rushing sound.

² *Stacher*, stagger.

³ *Belyve*, by-and-bye.

⁴ *Tentie*, attentively.

⁵ *Spier*s, inquires.

⁶ *Uncos*, anything unusual.

⁷ *Gars*, makes.

⁸ *Eydent*, diligent.

⁹ *Jauk*, dally, trifle.

¹⁰ *Hafflins*, almost.

¹¹ *Ben*, inner apartment.

¹² *Cracks*, chats, converses.

¹³ *Kye*, cows.

¹⁴ *Blate*, bashful.

¹⁵ *Laithfu'*, diffident.

¹⁶ *Lave*, others.

¹⁷ *Soupe*, drink.

¹⁸ *Hawkie*, cow.

¹⁹ *'Yont*, beyond.

²⁰ *Hallan*, a partition wall in a cottage.

²¹ *Weel-hained*, well kept.

²² *Kebuck*, cheese.

²³ *Fell*, hot, biting.

²⁴ *Towmond*, twelvemonth.

²⁵ *Lint i' the bell*, flax in flower.

²⁶ *Lyart haffets*, grey temples.

²⁷ *Wales*, chooses, selects.

²⁸ *Beets*, excites, nourishes.