Halloween - Hogmanay

HANDSEL – AULD HANDSEL MONDAY

IN

DUNFERMLINE &.

PRINTED ON DISC 2013

ISBN 978-1-909634-08-4

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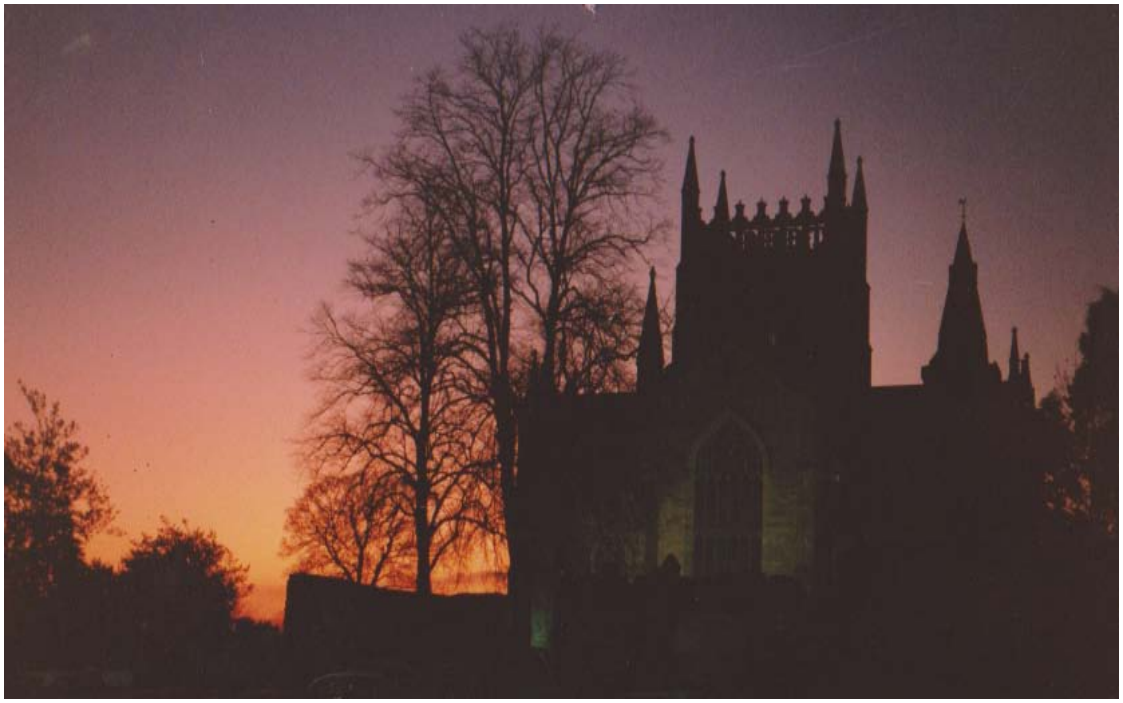

Compiled by Sheila Pitcairn FSA. Scot. LHG.

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HALLOWEEN

Halloween - The evening preceding Allhallows, to Haud Halloween. To observe the Haud Halloween. To observe the childish or superstitious rites appropriated to this evening.
Halloween Bleeze. A fire kindled on this evening by young people, on some rising ground.
Hallow-Day - The day of All-saints. (Jamison's Dictionary)

They say the Celtic people of Old Scotland marked Halloween as the end of summer and was called Samhain, celebrated on 31st October, the start of the long dark nights of winter.

The dark night with the moon shining, when the veil between the two worlds thins this could be eerie especially if you are young.

This was the night when the children dressed up and blackened their faces to go out guizing, for they were not afraid of the ghosts who would be around that night. Gas mantles in the street lights shone dim as they knocked on doors and sang songs, acted parts, collected biscuits, sweeties, pennies and rarely had a grumpy old person shuffle away and shut the door, they new better for it was a night to be careful of what, or who-oo was about.

When they got back home with their candle lit turnip lanterns with faces scraped out like scarecrows, which had guided them through the dark streets, and which they left lit at their front door to burn out. Then into a warm old and turnip ready to eat, the potatoes or the clootie dumping would have little

lucky charms, to find when eating, adding to the excitement, a black cat, a lucky horse shoe, a key, and an old boot and maybe a tickey, (a silver thrupenny piece). The dookin in a bath tub full of water for apples and nuts, screaming children, laughing, with their hands tied behind their backs sometimes they could use a fork in their mouths to grab an apple, a towel ready for the dripping wet faces. Then scones diamond or other shapes strung up on string across the room dripping with treacle with newspaper on the floor, and the children squealing again hands behind their backs, with laughter as they jumped up and down to bite into them trying not to get their faces covered, there would be someone hiding and pulling the string up and down to make sure they did get their faces covered with the treacle.

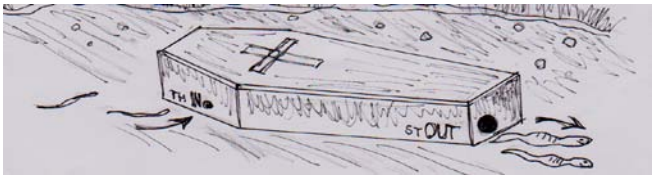
Later, sitting on the floor warm and happy after the excitement round the fender of the fire, 'cooried doon the gither' the stories would start, the gas light would be turned down, a hush, as a teenage girl would take a candle and look into the mirror to see if she could see her future husband standing behind her. Stories like –

Two women sat in the churchyard oo-oo oo-oo
One was thin and one was tall oo-oo oo-oo
They saw three corpses carried in 00-00 00-00
They were also tall and thin 00-00 00-00
The women to the corpses said 00-00 00-00
Will I look like you when I'm dead? 00-00 00-00
The corpses to the women said - **SCREAM !!!**

The children all clung together in laughter and fear, as the stories were told of demons, witches, warlocks, coffins, graveyards and ghosts and anything else outside that night trying to get in beside them. Everyone joined in the stories big sisters and brothers, mum and dad, granny and granddad and anyone else that happened to be there that night.

It has been known that the churchyard is where teenagers would go to put sheets over their heads and scare anyone who happened to pass, by running out waving their arms and back in hiding again.

Everyone was frightened and scared stiff by the end of the night!



Hallowe'en Story.

By J. Bain.

Aye, ah mind the guid auld days. Tumshie lights thit wir mair fricht'nin thin wan o' thon daft American pumpkin hings. Guisin wi yir pals an' gaun roon the neeburs tae dae yir wee party piece and ye might git some Soor Plooms or a Granny Sooker. An' whit aboot the Gobstopper? Ye couldnar beat it! Mind, yon toffee lollies we ca'd thon fryin' pans, cos that's whit they looked like. Aye, ye widnae want the Queen fir yir auntie wi' A' that stuff!
Then the pairtie. Treckle scones an' dookin fir aipples. Yir Gran losin' her wallies tryin' tae git the last aipple. Specially efter a couple o' Sherries!
Aye, the guid auld days! Ma fire wis roarin' up the lum an' ma feet wir just braw an' warm when thir wis a ca' in the door.

"Come awa' ben!" Ah greeted the meenister. A gey miserable faced mon. Ma Mither wid say "A face like a skelpit erse!" A wise wifie indeed.

"Dinnae like a' this Pagan stuff, ye ken." He stood at the fire tae warm ais ministerial offices. "It's no' richt tae hae guid Christian bairns, celebratin' thae hings.

"A wee cuppie, meenister? The kettles jist bilet."
Ah ken't the answer and got up afore 'e said ony mair. Ah pit watter in the cup and pit the sugar in. If ever a mon needed sweet'nin', it wis him. Ah pit Scotch Perkins on the plate an' took the tray ben the room. By noo the auld goat wis sittin' at the fireside. Guid joab' E kept 'Is shin oan. Ah kem yon feet beil!

We hid a wee bit blether and efter a while ah hid the place tae masel' again. Braw!

Near time noo. Better start. Ah hid a wash an' did ma hair. Pit oan the black dress an' bunnet as a'b'dy kens witches wear thum. Next, ma besom. The cauldron wis it the door stappit wi sweeties. The Tumshie licht wis oan the windie sill an' the caunel wis lichted. Aye, jist braw. The bairns like it when ye dress the pairt.

The first chap it the door. Ah went tae git it. The wee wan looked guid and sang a wee song. Ah haunded sweeties oot. The bairn thamkit me an' the mither smiled. The next chap. A cheeky wee bauchle, nae party piece. Jist a threat tae egg ma hoose if'n ah didnae gie ony sweeties. Ah kent what tae dae. He goat the sweeties. By the time that wis feenished he' hae a sair stomach. Clever fowk dinna threaten me. Nae mair threats. Time went oan,

bairns came and sang or acted a pairt. Wan wee clivir cloags did a bit o' Tam O' Shanter. Took me back tae the guid auld days again. Time wis drawin' oan. The fire burned lower. A gust o' wind an' the lum reeked in the room. Aye, pickin' up noo.
Nearly time.

At last, nae bairns. Naeb'dy in the streets, no even a cat. The wind was strang noo' ah could hear it birlin' aboot the lum. It sounded like a Banshee, Getting' closer.

At last!

Ah went tae the back door an' keeked oot. Nae 'hing aboot. Guid. Ah grabbed ma besom an' hid a daunder tae the kirkyaird. A few o' ma neeburs wir a'ready there. We greeted each aither an' when a'b'dy wis gaithered we had a guid laugh aboot the meenister. "Daft gowk!"

The bairns here in this toon hae guid minds. Maist o' them tell their mithers and faithers they see witches on their broomsticks at Hallowe'En. The parents jist laugh, Efter a' it's the only night when we kin gaither an be what we are.

We'll tell the bairns the truth…one day!

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UNCANNY STORY

A young boy was lying in his bed on Hogmanay night when he felt an ice cold finger go round and round his belly-button, and then he saw a boy and a girl appear before him. He shouted for his mother and she said "Oh that would have been your brother James and your sister Elizabeth who both died some time ago! He never forgot this night and told his own family the story in later years.

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HAVE YOU A HALLOWEEN STORY?

‘FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES’

(Scottish Folk-lore and Folk-Life by Donald A. Mackenzie.)

INTERESTING NOTES: -

Beltane festival – No connection with the god Baal.

The two great festivals in ancient Scotland were those of Beltane, the beginning of the “big sun” season, and Hallowe’en the eve before the “little sun” season, Beltane, in modern Scottish Gaelic *bealltuinn* and early Gaelic *beltene*, has no connexion with the ancient god called “Ball” or “Bel”. The prefix “bel” appears to signify “bright” or “white” in the magical sense, so that Beltane may have referred originally to the fires kindled by friction of fire sticks. This “new fire”, supposed to come from heaven, was reputed to purify and protect and bring everything summed up in the term “luck” – good health, good fortune, increase, &c. Hence the proverbial Gaelic saying: *eadar d'a theine Bhealltuinn* (“between two Beltane fires”). Before the Beltane fires were lit with ceremony, all house fires had to be extinguished and brands were taken from the bonfires to relight them. A brand was kept whirling round about when being carried to a house, and was called *dealan-d'e* (“brightness of the god”), a term also applied to the butterfly and to lightning (heavenly fire). On Beltane morning it was customary to assemble on an eminence to watch the dance of the “new sun”, which was reputed to whirl round three times on rising above the horizon. Faces were washed in May dew for protection against “evil eye”. There was dancing about the Beltane fires and luck was secured by leaping through the flames and smoke. Domesticated animals were driven over the embers for protection against all evil influences. Cakes bakes at a fire were ceremonially eaten after portions had been cast into the fire as offerings or flung over shoulders. Liquors were freely drunk. Pennant in his *Tour through Scotland* describes a Scottish Beltane ceremony as performed in the latter part of the eighteenth century:

“They cut a square trench in the ground, leaving the turf in the middle. On that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, oatmeal, butter and milk, and bring besides these plenty of beer and whisky. Each of the company must contribute something towards the feast. The rites begin by pouring a little of the caudle upon the ground, by way of a libation. Everyone then takes a cake of oatmeal, on which are raised nine square

knobs, each dedicated to some particular being who is supposed to preserve their herds, or to some animal the destroyer of them. Each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob and, flinging it over his shoulder, says, "this I give to thee' naming the being whom he thanks, '*preserver of my sheep*', &c.; or to the destroyer, '*This* I *give to thee* (O *fox or eagle*), *spare my lambs'*, &c. When this ceremony is over they all dine on the caudle."

Hallowe'en is in Scottish Gaelic *Samhuinn* and in Irish *Samhainn*. The usual translation is "summer-end". Dr Stokes, however, considered tha *samain* meant "assembly"* Bonfires were lit as at Beltane and there were dances, feasting and a good deal of drinking. In the houses divination ceremonies were practised, and a number of these are detailed in Burns's "Hallowe'en" poem. (See page 44) It was believe that a general flitting of supernatural beings took place during the night, and houses had to be specially protected against them.

Ancient pagan festivals were Christianized and to the new Christian festivals which were introduced certain of the pagan ceremonies were transferred. To Christmas and New Year's Day passed ceremonies and customs originally connected with *Samhuinn* ("Hallowe'en"). Christmas is known in Gaelic as *Nollaig*, a name derived from the Latin *Natalicia* ("the Nativity"), or as *latha Nollaig mho'ir* (the day of big Nollaig"), while New Year's day is *latha Nollaig bhig* ("the day of little Nollaig"), the seven days between Christmas and New Year being *Nollaig*. * The Irish assembly and feast on 1st May was called Ce't-shamain.

ALSO -

"Baal" Fires: - In 'Dalyells Darker Superstitions of Scotland' Ed. 1835 p.191. Occurs the following:- It appears that two periods of the year (or more were given to these Baal, or Bonfire rejoicings) First of May the festival of Baal, and the Summer solstice, besides other (times) in August and November were in marked by soleminster in honour of the Superior powers… On Midsummer Eve 'Bonfires are kindled in all directions, the young people dance around them, and some people drive their cattle through them.' These so called "Baal" fires were regularly kindled in Dunfermline, when I was a boy. Living in Hospital Hill the fire was kindled on the west side of the roadway, where the half ruined houses of Puddock Ha' were then (1840-45) still standing. Among other boys, I would run after the Edinburgh

Coach and shout to the passengers on the top – "A ha'penny or a penny for the baalfire?" running and repeating the cry till one or two coins were pitched at us. Our fire was indeed kindled on Queens Birthday 24th May and would be kindled because of this calender fact – but it is strange we boys, in 1840, should still be calling by the name of Bale.

ALSO: - See also "Hewat's" A Little Scotch World" p.7. Mr Hewat says the people of Prestwick had for centuries gathered round these fires. He is inclined to trace the existence of the little Burgh back to 983 A.D. from which date at least the fires had burned. (Anent Vo. V. by Daniel Thomson)

Note: - The Internet gives many interpretations of 'Baal', &c for further study.

HOGMANAY AND AULD HANDSEL MONDAY.

'Reminiscences of Dunfermline' by Alex. Stewart. p. 151-158.

The story of Hogmanay and Auld Handsel Monday is an old one, and has no doubt, been often told; but like the strains of an old and stirring melody, the recital of it anew –

"Calls back from out the spectral past,
Remembrance of the vanished faces,
That peopled hours too bright to last
In years that fled with lightening paces!"

- Halig monath – Some say Hogmanay means holy month, from the Saxon, because of its association with the commemoration of the birth of our Lord.

Long ago, Hogmanay, the last day of the year, which is generally understood to be of Pagan origin, and Handsel Monday, the first Monday of the year, Old Style, were regarded in Fifeshire as the real holidays of the year. In Aberdeenshire, Christmas or Yule-tide has always been considered such; while many other places kept New Year's Day as the chief holiday season in the year. The approach of Hogmanay and Aud Handsel Monday

was looked forward to with the keenest interest by old and young (by the young especially) in Dunfermline. For weeks previously working-men were universally saving and industrious – "on the pus," as it was then familiarly and caked - to meet the extra demands upon them at those times of universal hospitality. It ws a usual thing for master tradesmen to give their men and boys a supper on Hogmanay night, or a breakfast on Handsel Monday morning, if family reunions did not prevent. In some cases a small piece of money would be found beneath each person's plate. Previous to Hogmanay, much consideration was given by the youngsters as to what disguises they would adopt on that eventful night – what piece they would "act" at the different houses they intended to visit –whether it were to be the conflict between 'Norval and Glenalvon." Or "Here comes I, Gallashan, Gallashan, Gallashan is my name," or a bit out of the play of "Rob Roy," or out of the "Gentle Shepherd," &c. Sometimes they would arrange to be dressed up as gipsies and nondescripts, so that their own mothers would scarcely be able to tell who they were. The warriors were to have blackened faces and long beards formed of yarn ravellings; while their swords were to be made, not of Damascus steel, but of a piece of hoop-iron, got at Cooper Dick's or some other cooperage: and all this was to be accompanied with song-singing, fiddle-playing, and other wonderful exhibitions. Those important matters were arranged and settled weeks beforehand, Hogmanay was ushered in by the younger portion of the community payng visits during the day to their friends, relations, and acquaintances, in order to get their "Hogmanay" from them. The usual salutations given when they unceremoniously opened the doors of the houses they visited were – "*Hogmanay, Mistress*!"

Or – "Rise up, guidwife, an' shake your feathers,
Dinna think that we are beggars;
We are bairns come oot to play,
So let us have our hogmanay!"

Others would say –

"My feet's cauld, my shoon's thin
Gie's my cake and let me rin."

Or -

"Here comes the guisers,
Never been before,
Not to beg nor borrow,
But to drive away your sorrow."

In other cases they would begin the proceedings by singing a song or a chorus, and thus they would go from one house to another. As the evening set in, numerous bands of grown-up persons, male and female, sallied forth with their "false faces and their extraordinary guises on, to sing and "act" at the houses of friends and acquaintances. In many instances money was given to them, but the most of the guisers did it for the fun of the thing. There were usually refreshments offered and accepted, consisting of bread and cheese, currant loaf, hogmanays (or three cornered biscuits), and in some houses whisky to those who were grown up. As a finish up, the guisers would all join in th following refrain: -

"God bless the master of this house,
And mistress also,
Likewise the little bairnies,
That round the table go.
May your purse be full of money,
Your cellars full of beer,
We wish you many a Hogmanay,
And many a good New Year."

Hogmanay day (being, as already mentioned, the last day of the year) was considered by many a very lucky day for being married on, and hence there were large numbers who preferred that day for this important event. In consequence of this, Mr. Rankine had an unusually long list of "cryings" to proclaim on the Sabbaths previously in the Parish Church of Dunfermline.

AULD HANDSEL MONDAY.

"How it is, growing old, that what we've seen
In earliest days, should cling to memory yet,
When all the interval of life between,
Compared to that, seems easy to forget!

Auld Handsel Monday came in about a fortnight after Hogmanay, and was of all days the first and foremost of the year. It is now a thing of the past, and New Year's Day, though held with perhaps more outward decorum, but with far less enthusiasm, has taken its place. It is perhaps well that the changes was made for the advent of New Year's Day is now regarded everywhere as the most important epoch all the year. To the young, this season of festivity had a most peculiar fascination. Every spare copper was hoarded up for weeks previously, in order to purchase a long, tin *touting-horn*, or for the materials to make a flambeau, to be lighted and carried about on the great morning. Those boys were considered fortunate who had secured the remnants of torches borne at the masons' procession on St John's night, which took place in December. The following lines are taken from a poem written by a townsman, Mr R. Anderson, who for a good number of years resided in St Petersburg, and who died recently in his own native city. The subject is here introduced with great fidelity and vigour.

A laddie o' brave langsyne,
Ae Sabbath nicht lay doon at nine,
He sleepit soun' an' wanken'd fine
An' fresh for Handsel Monday.

His fambeau's o' hemp an' tar,
His trumpet's there, to rout an' roar
Wi's little drum, to deeve an' daur
The ghaists o' Handsel Monday.

Bob then got up withoot a licht,
An' gae his face a hurried dicht,
Pat on his claes – a happy wicht,
Prepared for Handsel Monday.

Then stealin' oot an' doon the stair,
Tam, Jack, an' Sandy, an' lots mair,
Were waitin' him – be't foul or fair,
Ready for Handsel Monday.

They waited till the Auld Kirk bell
Struck twal', then at the final knell
The laddies a' set up a yell –
Hurrah for Handsel Monday!

From every close-mouth oot they ran,
Wi' lichtit torches every one,
Routin' their horns loud an' grand'.
To bring in Handsel Monday.
The biel-fires blaze, the flame beaux flare,
The yells an' shoutin' fill the air,
Douce bodies frae their windows stair,
An' say – it's Handsel Monday.

The festivities connected with Handsel Monday commenced immediately after the clock proclaimed the solemn hour of twelve on Sunday night. Many persons old and young made a practice of "*clipping the wings of the Sabbath*," by retiring to bed some hours earlier than ordinary. The "gatherin' coal" had been put on and happed more carefully than usual, so that a good fire could instantly be made. Many cases the excitement prevented sound sleep, and the stroke of the midnight hour found many hundreds of persons bustling about ready to sally out into the cold, dark night, with blazing flambeaux, many first-footing; some with long tin horns, blowing a blast sufficient to arouse the soundest sleeper. In a brief space of time the usually dark and sombre streets of Dunfermline at that early hour were now all alive with fun and noise, and the blazing torches seen flitting about in the dim, dark distance gave them a weird-like aspect. What with the noise of horn-blowing, the merry shouts of parties going along first-footing, singing, and fiddle-playing, the slumbers of many quietly disposed persons were sadly disturbed. But after all, who would not forgive them? Did not that eventful morning come only once a year to cheer and gladden them?

The parties who went to first-foot - and dark complexioned persons, or *black-a-vised* ones, were preferred, being considered the more lucky – never went empty handed, for this would have been a serious omission. They often carried with them some buns or shortbread or oatmeal cakes, and usually had a bottle of whisky, sometimes ginger wine, and sometimes a 'het pint' composed of hot spiced ale, with eggs beat up in it, or broken buns or biscuits called 'bakes'. These drinks were brought to the bedsides of the old people, and privacy being in some manner invaded, but amongst friends and neighbours this was not deemed out of place in those times. Old as well as young were expected at that early hour to partake of the drink that was offered to them, and this was for good luck and a merry Handsel Monday. It was considered undesirable to be your own first-foot, and cases have been known in which paterfamilias returning home after twelve has been kept waiting outside till someone else arrived.

The breakfast on that morning was of an unusual and elaborate character. It might be that during a great portion of the year many had enjoyed what Burns calls "the chief o' Scotia's food," but this morning it was a complete change of breakfast fare, to please old and young. It was to the young especially a red-letter morning to be remembered. Fat or kail brose was often made.

As the day wore on, many kindly visits were paid by friends and neighbours to each other, and the rites of hospitality were freely given and received. Feuds and quarrels, if any existed, were then made up and forgotten. There was always a hearty salutation offered to callers, and a blithe "Come awa' ben an' rest ye," cordially given; while at the same time the best the house could afford in the shape of refreshments were set before them. There was abundance of plain, substantial fare provided for all visitors who crossed the threshold on that hallowed day. During the most part of the week very little work was done. They were usually termed the "*daft days*," to indicate that it was a period of joviality to old and young. On the Monday and Tuesday, at least, not a stroke of work was done. Every one was free to "lift the sneck" of his neighbour's door without "tirlin'" thereat and walk in *sans ce'remonie*, and wish his friends "a merry Handsel Monday, and mony o' them."

"There was an open door, that friends might dander in,
An' taste the kebbuck, an' tell the news."

All were usually dressed in their Sunday garb; and as every kind of wark was at a complete stand-still, the day had something of an extraordinary aspect about it. Neither a Sabbath nor a Saturday look it had. The youngsters would receive their "handsel" from friends, neighbours and visitors; and in those days a penny or a sixpence would in many instances, be more prized by the young folks than perhaps a ten pound note would be in after years. During that day and Tuesday, refreshments stood ready on the table, the dresser, or sideboard, for callers – precisely as it is the custom at the present time in New York to treat friends and visitors on a New Year's Day. The only difference was, that in Dunfermline there was the large "curran' loaf," *specially baked for the occasion*, the homely kebbuck of cheese, the beautiful shortbread (such as no other country can produce), farrels and oatmeal cakes (having carvey seeds), along with ginger wine and the unfailing "Jeroboam," the whisky bottle; while in New York expensive wines, brandy, cakes and confectionery are liberally supplied. An American visitor once remarked tht at New Year time in Scotland it ws nothing but cakes and cheese and whisky, and whisky and cheese and cakes, all day long! Two or three days after the festivities the tired youngsters were sometimes treated to a cupful or two of salts and senna to put their sorely tired stomachs into their usual state of efficiency.

Many of Dunfermline's sons and daughters will look back with pleasure, yet with a degree of sadness, to the vanished Handsel Mondays and Tuesdays of bygone years! A famous season it was for the reunion of friends and members of families, who were scattered far and wide, and when far fewer facilities existed for meeting than now. There were many happy family gatherings, reunions and private social meetings as those evenings fell. It might be cold and dreary outside, but within, the fireside presented a happy and an animated appearance.

Every face was lit up with smiles, and the hand was every ready with the grasp of friendship and love. The old and the young met together, children's children were there, beneath and old rooftrees and "weary carking care" was for the time being cast to the winds -

"It was the hour when happy faces
Smiled around the taper light."

Songs were sung, stories told, and game and pastimes engaged in with a heartiness and a homeliness that are now almost unknown. It seems to us as if our modern songs do not touch the heart and they seem to have but a transitory existence, unlike the songs of bygone days. A song worthy of the name never gets threadbare, for, like the sunshine on the everlasting hills, it is ever new and ever beautiful.

All vanished now are the old worthies who fifty years ago presided at those friendly reunions – the men who graced with their hoary heads and venerable presence the frugal and hospitable board of those happy homes on the nights of Auld Handsel Monday and Tuesday, where young and old could freely say –

"Happy we've been a' the gither,
Happy we've been ane and a'."

and who, when the hour of parting came, could join hands and hearts, some of them for the last time, in singing that soul-stirring and grandly pathetic national song –

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot!"

(Reminiscences of Dunfermline by Alex Stewart circa 1886)

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HANDSEL AND AULD HANDSEL MONDAY

OLD TIME REMINISCENCES.

Post-Reformation – The origins of Handsel Monday go back to days when staunch, Presbyterians banned the "Popish" festival of Christmas. Since most Scots however, still wanted some kind of festivity, they switched their feasting and other forms of celebrations to the New Year.

When in 1752 – The calendar was reformed with 11 days being removed from the month of September, many Scots resented the change. Handsel Monday remained the main holiday occasion in Fife, Stirling and in some other Scottish counties, but the date was calculated as if the old calendar were still in general use. Fifers and Stirling folk added on the 11 lost days' and thus celebrated what came to be known as Auld Handsel Monday on the first Monday after the 12th of January.

HANDSEL, MONDAY.

From
When We Were Boys. (1911)

Some of your readers will remember the great controversy over the proposal to change the mid-winter holiday from Auld Handsel Monday – the first Monday after the second Sunday of the year, I think it was – to New Handsel Monday. One of the liveliest meetings in Dunfermline I ever attended was to decide the issue. Mr Beveridge was on the side of the innovators; many of the handloom weavers still employed in the shops favoured the old day and the old way, and fought hard for the retention of what one of the speakers called "the ancient land marks." The change was resisted for some time, but eventually the reformers won, mainly on the plea of convenience, if I remember aright, a plea strongly supported by parents who had sons and daughters located in the cities and district towns, who, naturally, desired to have the full family reunion on New Year's Day, the only time possible for such united gatherings.

AULD HANSEL GIFTS

In Scotland, gifts were given traditionally on the first Monday of the New Year instead of Christmas, which was regarded by Presbyterians as a pagan festival. Hansel Monday was the day of visiting or 'hanseling' when small gifts were given to children and servants.

After 11 days were taken from the year when the Calendar was reformed in 1752, many people demanded their eleven lost days' and in Scotland, each New Year began after the eleven lost days were counted.

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OLD TIME REMINISCENCES

A HANDSEL FESTIVITY

THE DUNFERMLINE JOURNAL
SATURDAY 16 JANUARY 1909.

The Auld Handsel Monday festivity, remembered by the older people in our midst, was a comparatively innocent introduction to the "daft-days" of tradition. Doubtless they in their youth heard stories, which had been transmitted from sire to son descriptive of the riotous excuse, which marked the winter festival, which was designed to promote friendship and good-will. None of them we take it can claim to have been witnesses of the prize-fights in which the boxing champions of the weavers and of the ploughmen were wont to engage or of the tumultuous violence which accompanied and followed the unseemly contests. Few if any survive who have witnessed the game-cock fight that used to be the exciting entertainment by which the Handsel week was ushered in sixty or seventy years ago, when this vicious form of sport was indulged in. The organisers of the display of bird-savagery felt it necessary to maintain secrecy worthy of the modern Nihilists, and succeeded remarkably well in hiding their evil deeds under a cloud of darkness. Some old citizens, however, may remember to have seen the owner of a comb-torn and blood-stained champion cock staggering home in the early forenoon, carrying his bird under his "oxter" pausing to tell the story of his triumph to interested listeners, and showing the steel heel by which the rival bird had recorded its death blow. When the young people of those days read Robert Gilfillan's satire on the drunken habits that prevailed a century ago, they had little difficulty in identifying the jubilant toper who sang for a week or two after Handsel Monday – I've aye been fou sin the year cam' in" with the bibulous cock-fighter, who, happily, had long since disappeared from social life.

The Handsel Monday memories most cherished by the older generation who remain with us recall many innocent pleasures and enjoyments. The dark nights of the long dreary winter had scarcely set in before the eager and expectant spirits of the younger members of the family began to count the

weeks lying between them and the great day of rejoicing. The "purly-jug" was brought into requisition and friends and neighbours were informed that "gathering up for Handsel on Monday" had begun. The hope of a bawbee caused "some tentie rin a cannie errand." The promise of some rope or tallow or other material for a flambeau made many a face willing to perform a service which at another time would have been grudgingly done. The lantern formed out of a large turnip for the Hogmanay guizing nights was accounted a dull and unattractive illuminant compared with the flaming flambeau carried through the streets in the early morning hours. The blowing of horns and the sounding of trumpets were considered far more befitting music for the ushering of Handsel Monday than the strains of the concertina or the piping of the flute. After the morning's happy revelry the young folks were refreshed by a sumptuous breakfast yet, however much might then have been stowed away a corner was cheerfully found as the good things supplied when the friendly morning calls on uncles and aunts were begun were at least sampled. Next the Handsel Monday tribute money was colleted; and a forenoon visit was paid to "the toon," where the High Street, the Bridge, part of Chalmers Street, the Kirkgate, the Maygate, Abbot Street, and part of Guildhall Street were lined with stalls laden with a great variety of attractive wares and eatables. The afternoon was devoted to out-door sports: - such as shinty, and, if the weather permitted, slidng land skating and snow balling. In the evening the feasting was prolonged in the shape of "parties;" and one outstanding public attraction was the "Festival" of the Total Abstinence Society, held in the Music hall, now used as the 'Journal" Printing Works. The memories of the joys of the day were cherished especially by the sons and daughters of the city who, impelled by the stern necessity caused by the recurrent periods of dullness in the handloom linen trade, or by the honourable ambition of improving their position in life, sought and found other spheres of residence and employment. For many years, wherever two or three Dunfermline people could be gathered together in the more or less distant towns, a Handsel Monday reunion was held for the sake of Auld Lang Syne, and no where were these gatherings more successful or more innocently jubilant than in Glasgow.

GLASGOW CELEBRATION

One of the most enthusiastic promoters of these Glasgow celebrations was Mr Henry Stenhouse, who early in life obtained an appointment in the Central Post Office of the large city, and who in undying love for his native Dunfermline took a friendly interest in all Dunfermline people who came within reach of his influence in Glasgow. Mr Stenhouse frequently presided himself at the Glasgow Dunfermline gatherings, but on the 17th January 1859, he gave place in the chair to his colleague in the office, Mr William Wishart, an uncle of the Lord Advocate, who was born in Woodhead Street in the year 1805, was baptised in Queen Anne Street Church, and who after a few years served in the Glasgow Post Office as one of Mr Stenhouse's colleagues, receiving on the termination of his services silver snuff box as a parting testimonial of esteem. A plaque of the "Journal" has favoured us with a copy of the "Mulletin" of Glasgow for 19th January 1859, containing a long report of the evening proceedings testimonies of esteem and from Mr Wishart's reminisce speech we make the following extracts:

We might with propriety adopt the language of Blair to our present circumstances and call on busy meddling memory, to muster up in sweet succession, the past endearments of former years Hogmanay had not only its pleasing and peculiar fascinations for the young, but it had also moments for those of more mature age, well to have the best effects on their approach generally confined to the neighbourhood in which we resided going from house to house partaking of their hospitality. And mind you the gud wives of Dumfarlen had nane o' your Glasco fashions wi' their obscene two three bite upon a plate – oo; they brocht ben a great big Dulop kebbook, cakes of their ain bakin and a wee glass, Whisky bottle and these I can assure you whatever travellers may think had a powerful effect in producing the hilarity of the evening. Animosity if such a thing did arise was there to be forgotten and friendships that had been ripened in the past were cemented so firmly at these meeting that was notwithstanding its power has been unable to read them asunder. (Dunfermline Journal 16 Jan 1909)

Handsel Monday – remained until weel into the 19th century the most popular festival of them all.

> "Call back from out the spectral past,
> Remember of the vanished faces,
> That people hours too bright to last
> In yeas that fled with lightning paces!"

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Handsel Monday – In the old days, although **New** Year's Day was a holiday in Edinburgh and othe large centers that was not the case in Fife. Handsel Monday unlike New Year's Day it was a public holiday, with all factories, offices, schools and most shops shut for the day. In Andrew Carnegie's day, Handsel Monday was the main winter holiday in towns like Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Stirling.

HAPPY HANDSEL.

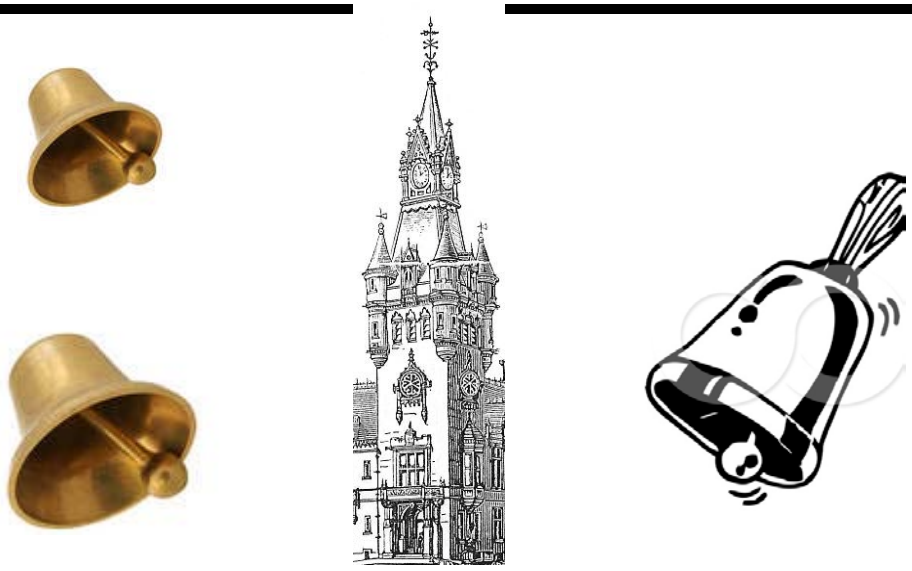
Welcome!

Black bun, with raisins, currants, sweet almonds, orange, lemon and peel, flour, demerara sugar, ground cloves or cinnamon, ground ginger, Jamaica pepper, black pepper, baking-soda, buttermilk or eggs, brandy, crust, flour butter water (old recipe from Elspeth King) and baked in it's coffin of thick crust. Robert Louis Stevenson 'A black substance inimical to life' also shortbread Whisky!
All placed on the sideboard awaiting those coming to first foot with their tooting horn, noisy drum and piece of coal.

HOGMANAY

Journal 31st DECEMBER 1909.

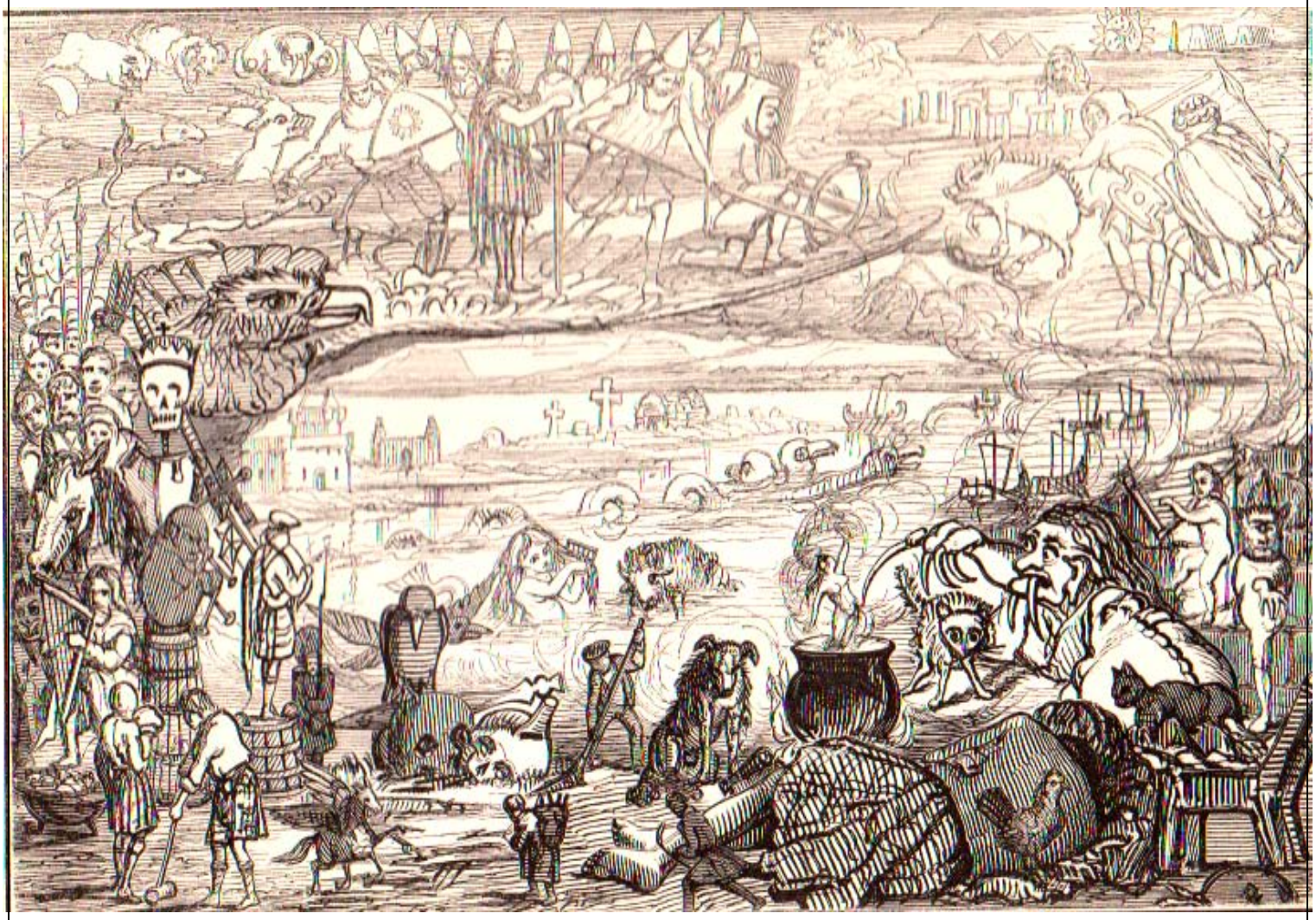
HOGMANY & NEW YEAR



"Freedom an' whiskey gang the gither" was Burns modification of the older-world practice, the associated Religion with festivity. Hogmanay made holy month, from the Saxon halig monath,* because of its association with the commemoration of the birth of our Lord. New Year's Eve is Hogmanay-night or hogg-night. King Haco of Norway fixed the feast of Yule on Christmas Day, which used to be called hogg-night, but the Scotch were taught by the French to transfer the feast of Yole to the feast of Noel, and hogg-night has ever since been the last day of December, a festal time marked with not a little bibulous indulgence. So the wassail of New Year or of Handsel Monday, according to the old or the new style became gradually transformed from the Saxon "water of health" into reckless indulgence in the drinking of intoxicating liquor. And just as Burns was ready to declare that the national beverage gave him who imbibed it "Mair than either schule or college," so in the days of our forefathers a Handsel Monday drinking bout was regarded as a perfect cure for many ailments. In Sir J. Sinclair's "Statistical Account," a story is told of a collier-who in the year 1758 was effectually freed from rheumatism or gout" by drinking freely of new ale full of barm or yeast."

HOGMANAY - HANDSEL AND AULD HANDSEL MONDAY

The reek is better than a nothern blast. 'Tis the reek that is within that will come out.



But the reek that is in it can come out of a pot. - Ashypet of the ashes will be a saucy gallant.

(Left side) – Its own reek is in each peat end (head) - (Right side) – He has got a turn through the reek.

POPULAR TALES OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS VOL. IV 1862.

AULD HANDSEL MONDAY AND NEW YEAR CUSTOMS FITY YEARS AGO

Written in 1875.
By Joseph Hutton, Dunfermline.

History takes little or no notice of Handsel Monday, the mists of centuries completely obscured its origin but from generation to generation, from sire to son, Handsel Monday has been, among the peasantry of Scotland observed as a day of feasting and friendly meetings; eat, drink, and be happy seemed at all times to be the custom of the day. The word handsel seems to imply a gift, or the induring of some new garment. It stands just equivalent to the giving of a Christmas box. The oldest man in the midst of us will surely remember when a boy how customary it as to say, "Hae, Robin, there's a penny to handsel your new breeks," &c.

It has been customary in Scotland to give handsel to postmen, deliverers of papers, scavengers, and town drummers, and others, especially those that were in positions in society to confer alignments. I may here go back and take a note of Dunfermline fifty years ago; of course it was not, I daresay by about a third part, so large as it is now. Then, the town's drummer, one the name of James Dow, an old military drummer, went around the streets in the morning, finishing up his round at the Townhouse by six o'clock. He made his call, as the reward for his labour, at Auld Handsel Monday season, and received from the inhabitants his handsel.

David Paton, a little time previous to the above date, aroused the inhabitants. David sometimes beat the drum, and other times played the bagpipes. David was accosted once by a man asking him, "what tune was that that you was playin' i' the noo, Davie?" "A weel," says David, "Neither do I, so ye see your nae faurer forrit nor mysel'." David sometimes took evening serenades, like-wise. David had an original turn of mind, and will be long remembered by the auld inhabitants of the town.

Auld Handsel Monday, that is old style, or the first Monday after the 12th of the month, was the day usually held. The farmers used to treat the whole of their servants on that morning to a liberal breakfast, with roast and boiled, with ale, whisky, cakes, and cheese to their heart's contentment. They then, after breakfast, went about visiting friends and acquaintances for the remainder of the day. It was also the day when any disposed for change gave up their places, and when new servants were engaged.

Dunfermline, upwards of forty years ago, when handloom weaving was in its greatest numerical strength, it was customary then for masters to invite their servants, journeymen, and apprentices, to either their Hogmanay or Handsel Monday breakfast, and that was a happy perspective. For weeks before hand, the shuttle was piled late and early with evident hand – that was called the Handsel Monday "push." Not an hour to spare at these times, so that a little of the needful may be obtained at that festive season, for working folk in general are well aware that poor is the joy no coin possessing. We must now make a visit to a respectable tradesman's breakfast table on that auspicious morn, and see the happy gathering. Brothers and sisters meet once again under the old parental roof, friends and acquaintances all once more in company with each other. There is a feeling that comes over one at such friendly feasts as do not easily escape from memory's fading page. No, these annual associations are entwined around our memories, and never, never are forgot while "our crimson currents flow."

Old mother puts on the big kail pot after the reading on Sunday evening with a good junk of beef, and a clean singed nowt's foot into it. All attention is bestowed, keeping up a cantie fire to the pot. It's now Handsel Monday morning. The tin horns are proclaiming and heralding in the morn,. The shouts of mirth from the groups of first-footers, the tapping at doors, the cheerful, merry laughter of the fair sex, all convincingly tell that Auld Handsel Monday has come again. Mother gets up, so does the old man. The house is all early asteer, the laddies are oot wi' their horns and flambeaus frae we ken na when, and, as the pot is boiling, the auld wife does not dree their hungry incoming, fro here is plenty. They get a cog o' fine fat brose, to lay the grund o' their stomach, and support their patience until the regular breakfast or. Stalks o' toasted bread well buttered testify tht the auld wife has had a busy morning's wark. A' is clean, and every corner tidied up long ere the looked for morning comes.

The breakfast hour draws near, the fires are fine and cosie, all is in readiness for the guests. The streets now begin to throng, hundreds going hither and thither, and it really is a fine sight to see so many happy faces, and al so clean and well put on. The children generally are figuring in new dresses, and a; in high hopes to get their handsel frae grandfather and grandma. The hour of breakfast arrives, the auld man by a cosie fire has resumed his arm chair, his sneeshin-mill well primed. Here now the members of the family and friends begin to assemble – journeymen and apprentices, a hearty welcome is accorded to all, and as heartily responded to. The morning being cold and stormy, and the guid-wife no wantin' to lose the season o' the breakfast says, "Noo, bodies, see an' tak' your seats." "Will ye no hae seats enoo'," says the maister. "Davie, gang awa ben the shop for a seat-tree, and weel soon gie ye a' seats." The house had really a real Hansel Monday appearance. A braw white damask table-cloth adorned the table, the big sachets were filled to the brim, and the clean shining china cups and saucers, the proud bridal gift of auld grannie, gave a complete lustre to the scene, and no doubt reflected great credit on the auld folks, filling their hearts wi' a sort of a contented pride and pleasure. "As your a' set noo bodies, gie's a word or twa, guidman, for I'm fear'd the beef be cauld." The guidman, ever ready to obey, asks a blessing. "Noo," says grannie, "as there may no be knives an' forks for ye a', the ane maun just carve for the ither, an' a do awa' the best way ye can, for I'm sure your getting w' guid will." The auld man every noo and again tells them to eat hearty, and they'll be a' the abler to stand a guid dram if they should fa' in wi' friends, for a fou stomach was guid ballast to keep them steady.

Ample justice having been done to the good things set bfore them, the white cloth is removed, and a fine table-cover takes its place. The Hansel Monday kebbuck graces the table; oat cake, farls, curn bun, and shortbread. They're a' that weel filled up that little mair can be done for the present but sit and look at them.

The auld guidwife is presented with the glass, and wishes them a' weel, and hopes that they will see mony mair Handsel Mondays. The guidman does the same; then round and round the bottle goes, pledging, in a real Handsel Monday style, health to each other. I was a very common custom at such meetings after partaking so freely of the auld folks' hospitality, to all join and provide a wee drap or themselves, setting aside the wee drap belonging to the house. Then the auld punch bowel was in requisition; it

was only on high occasions that it graced the table. In quick succession follows the joke and laugh. The very fact that it is Handsel Monday seems to have an exhilarating tendency for song, joke, and sentiment; all go round in a friendly manner, and a few hours are in such a manner spent very pleasantly.

The apprentices receive from their master their handsel; their mistress never far behind gives them her blessing; and all the youngsters command special attention at such times, and not one of them must be omitted, to prevent any acrimony among mothers. As the Handsel Monday breakfast appointment has been respected, the company generally step out to see what is going on; the women, owing to the cold weather, generally keep the house. In a friendly neighbourhood arrangements are previously made, and if not, any one is welcome to have a walk into the country to some of the villages at hand, such as Crossford, Carnock, &c.

Now, as these social neighbourly gatherings are in general the finest hours that are spent on the whole occasion, I will enter more fully into a sketch of such meetings. The village arrived at, a room is taken possession of, one, if possible, to accommodate the company, which is often considerable. A chairman is appointed, one, if possible, that either from age or some other distinction, is recommended. A small piece of money is taken from each individual at the onset, allowing any one liberty to leave at pleasure. The Chairman takes note of all expended, &c.

Mr John Frost is proposed to sake the chair. (Applause.)

John occupies the chair, drinks to the company with all the compliments of the season, but before sitting down he said that he felt inclined to offer a few remarks – remarks upon a very prevalent, but every ancient custom: that of the drinking of health. Till very few years ago the custom of the wasshael bowel in Scotland was very common; it was just a custom of families sitting out the old year and brining in the new at a bit pint, and drinking a good health to each other, &c. But the word *wasshael* is derived from the ancient Saxon phrase, which means, "to your health;" the word is interpreted by Verstigan, wasshael, "grow, or become well." So now, gentlemen, you will perhaps be more clear on that head, that the drinking of healths is of very ancient date. Mr Frost resumed his seat, amid much applause.

Mr Winter was requested for a song. He gave "Auld Lang-syne," the company joining in the chorus in the real Handsel Monday spirit. Our poet Burns said tht he had a wish. His wish was –

"That he for puir auld Scotland's sake
Some useful' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

So to the undying memory of our venerated bard, tht wish has been matchlessly accomplished.

The company began to general conversation, local news, and politics, reviewing, in a few minutes, a whole session of Parliament – abolishing game laws and rooting up deer forests, and highly commending Mr J. Bright's idea of the sale of waste land, and passing Mundella's nine hours' bill. Seeing that when tongues grew short, arms might grow lang, the Chairman called order, and proposed a verse from Thomas Green, when Mr Green gave, in the real Scottish style, "The kail brose o' auld Scotland,"

"An' o' for the Scottish kail brose."

A fine story was then given by an auld man, who was a full believer in witches, viz.:-

AULD JONNIE WEEK.

It went on thus: - "In Kinross there lived an auld man and his spouse, Nancy; they kept a cow and sold the milk. The cow was witched one day. There lived n their neighbourhood an auld wife, who was thocht by mony ane no to be cannie. Kate Crail was her name. So ye see Kate was in the habit of getting milk daily frae Nancy, and whiles cam' and disturbit them when engaged at family devotion – to the credit o' our forbears, a guidly custom, mair general in the covenanting times than noo; it is to our shame, be it said. So to prevent Kate disturbing them at their reading, Kate's bowl was set out wi' her milk into the window sole. So one morning Kate's bowl was completely forgot by Nancy, or Mrs Paton, tht being her husband's name, so in cam' Kate, after the reading, and sought her bowl. Mrs Paton made a lapfu' o' apologies to Kate for her neglect.

"'Aweel,' quoth Kate, in a rage, 'what a fell like thing o'e to gar me, or ony puir auld body like me, have to want their wee drap milk and sup dry brose on your account; but. But, lass, you'll maybe no be lang when ye'll want milk yoursel' some morning.'

"That gaed to Mrs Paton's heart, as it did, just like a knife. And frae that hour her bonnie Crummie took ill. Noo, what was to be done; she sent at once for John Thomson, the smith, being a man weel skilled in baith horse and kye. So John cam' wi' haste, went into the byre, allowing naebody to enter but himsel', made a full examination of the cow, came out, took Mrs Paton by hersel' and told her tht her guid cow had been witched. 'O, dear me, John' I was just fearin' that.' 'Were they onybody in your byre wi' ye lately?' 'No, no, John' no a creture but mysel'; but,' says she, 'I am fear'd that it's that fulthy body, Kate Crail, that has witched my bonnie cow.' 'I was sure o' that; that's just it noo.' John got a' the milk story frae Mrs Paton. 'Noo,' says the smith, 'it's guid that ye hae sent for me in the very nick o' time. I'll go and tak' a drap bluid frae her; bring me a big basin.' So John bled the cow, and took a hale basin o' bluid frae her; cam' awa' into the kitchen wi' the bluid.

"'Noo,' says John, 'gie me doon the frying-pan, and shut th door, Mrs Paton, quick, quick!' That being done, the frying-pan was put on the fire wi' the cow's bluid. 'Noo,' says the smith, 'we'll find out the vile witch noo, gif she be in a' the toon o' Kinross.'

"So it ws just true as the smith said, when the cow's bluid began to fry and boil in the pan, a most desperate rap cam' to the door, and a voice cried, 'O, for guidsake tak' that aff yer fire. O, do tak' it aff yer fire, Nance, for my very heart's bluid is boiling within me. O, I cannie stand this!'

"So Mrs Paton opened the door and in cam' Kate, roaring for mercy's sake to the smith to tak' aff the pan. 'Weel. Says John, 'I'll do sae, ye vile bodie gif ye promise by a' that's abune your shoulders, tht ye will never do sic a vile trick again to neither Nancy or only ither bodie a'yer days again in a' the toon o' Kinross.'

"The witch, Kate Crail, made her vows that she ne'er again would do the like in her life. The frying-pan was lifted aff the fire, that moment Kate's pain ceased, and Crummie in a day or two was as weel as ever. An' noo, my friends, ye may weel believe tht story; it is just as true as it had been printed in the guid beuk, next verse to the Witch o' Endor."

A hearty burst of laughter enchored auld Johnnie Week's story.

The Chairman proposed the health of Mr Week, which was drunk with enthusiasm. He stated tht as the day was passing so pleasantly away that he felt an idea strike him – the witch story, no doubt, had given birth to it – it

was a poem addressed by our celebrated bard to Mr Mitchell, Collector of Excise, Dumfries, 1796. The poem, by their permission, he would repeat. (Applause.)

"Friend of the poet, tried an' leal,
Wha wantin' thee might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle deil
Wi a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin' jig and reel
In my poor pouches!

I modestly fu' fain would hint it,
That one pound one I sairly want it;
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life blood dunted,
I'd bear't in mind.

So may the auld year gang out moaning
To see the new come laden groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin'
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowing
The hale design."

(Great applause.)

At this moment Mr Glenco, the old dominie, entered the room to the great satisfaction of the company, all the way from Crossgates. His health was drunk by al the company. Mr Glenco returned the company thanks in a very neat and comprehensive speech, as was, by al tht new him, expected. He remarked tht at this festive season many thoughts arose in a person's mind – thoughts of the days that had forever fled, of the many sweet associations they had enjoyed, and of the many friends that had departed. The dominie perceived that his speech was to partake too much of the grave for an Auld Handsel Monday occasion, cut short with the auld saying abut magpies –

"One, sorrow;
Two, mirth;
Three, a wedding;
Four, death."

"Capital! Capital!" bawled out Robie Buist; "first-rate, Mr Glenco. I see what that learning can dol. My faither used to say that edication made the man. I really see its true. What a grand conclusion; ha, ha, ha! But I hae anither set o't, Mr Glenco, it's this, sir – 'Ane's joy; twa's grief; three, a wedding; four, death.' I'll ne'er forget that magpie rant a' the days o' my life, Mr Glenco. When I was a little laddie rinnin' awa' to the sea to gather wilks in summer days, gif I had seen a piet on the way I would hae said to my neighbours, Did ye see tht piet?' 'Aye they were twa.' Twa!' Well, I turned frichtit, and began to glower up to the clouds to see if it was to come on a thunder. 'Eh. Eh.' cries out my neighbours, 'Bob, there's anither, and' anither.' That set me aff as hard's I could bicker, wi' my toom pitcher, glowerin a' the hedges sides for fear o' tinklers, and ilka minute or twa up tae the clouds for thunder. My mither would hae said 'What, Bob, hame already; an' where's yer wilks, Bob?' I just said, 'I couldna get nane, mither; it was fu' sea.'"

"Well done, Robert," said Mr Glenco; "the conclusion of my remarks has served as a foundation for your – dare I say it?" "Oh, say awa', Mr Glenco." "For your youthful display of cowardice. Well, after such a confession, Robert, I conclude, were a mouse to place itself beside your tumbler just now, that you would feel afraid to raise it to your lips."

"Weel, maybe I micht, Mr Glenco, but that would just be if the wasna as muckle in the tumbler as sloaken a mouse. Ha, ha, ha! You're done again dominie; done again!" then the banter ceased, Mr Glenco taking a hearty laugh a Robie's humorous manner.

The Chairman – I am requested to solicit the favour of a few observations from Mr Glenco, but as our stay in this village will now be of short duration you will oblige my condensation of sentiment.

Mr Chairman, I heartily will oblige your requisitionists, and will observe brevity. My friends, I have in my hand just now a friend's snuff-box; it has brought to my mind a subject which I shall proceed with; Tobacco was introduced into Europe from the province of Tobago in St Domingo in 1559, by a Spanish gentleman, who brought a small quantity into Spain and Portugal, &c. Both in France and the Papal States it was received with general enthusiasm in the shape of snuff, but it was sometime after the use of tobacco as snuff that the practice of smoking commenced. In 1585 it was introduced into England by either Sir Francis Drake or Sir Walter Raleigh.

Lines taken from the "Marrow of Compliment," written in 1654, show the prevalence of smoking at tht period;-

"Much meat doeth gluttony procure,
To feed men fat as swine,
But he's a frugal man indeed,
That on a leaf can dine;
He needs no napkin for his hands,
His finger ends to wipe,
That hath his kitchen in a box,
His roast meat in a pipe!"

So, Mr Frost, I certainly have attended to our expressed wish, viz., condensation.

Mr Frost urged Mr Glenco to go on as they had an hour or two to spend ere they returned home. I did not intend so much brevity.

Mr Glenco resumed his speech. He stated that he would offer a few remarks from history, chiefly on New Year customs, &c. (Applause.) My friends, the custom of making presents on New Year's Day was no doubt derived from the Romans. Suitonius and Tacitus both mention it. Claudius prohibited demanding presents except on this day. The Saxons kept the festival of the New Year with more than ordinary feasting and jollity, and with the presenting of New Year gifts to each other. The New Year gifts presented by individuals to each other were suited to sex, rank, situation, and circumstances. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the presenting of New Year gifts to the Sovereign was carried to an extravagant height. The gifts regularly presented to her were of great value. An exact and descriptive inventory of them was made every year on a roll, which was signed by the Queen herself, and by the proper officers. The presents, were made by the officers of state, peers and peeresses, bishops, knights, &c., down to Her Majesty's dustmen. 1561, Queen Elizabeth was presented by her silk woman, Mrs Montague, with a pair of black silk knit stockings, and, thenceforth, she never wore cloth hose any mole. The Queen gave gilt plate in return, an exact account of the gifts given in return was kept. No rolls nor any notices seem to have been preserved of New Year's gifts presented to Charles the First. Then custom no doubt ceased entirely during the Commonwealth, and was never afterwards revived. Gentlemen, I will not

occupy your time any further on the New Year gifts than to add that gloves and pins were customary New Year gifts about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Pins were made of bone, boxwood, and silver for the rich, and those used by the poor were of common wood, in fact skewers. I feel it somewhat tedious to continue on this subject any longer, but my labour may perhaps not have proved fruitless, if anyone has derived any information from my historical gleanings (Applause.)

Here a general conversation ensued, touching upon all subjects.

Chairman called order, and called upon auld Thomas Wylie for a song.

Thomas replied that he wasna ver able to sing noo, but he wadna let it stand at his door, and gave –

"Fine broom besoms,
Better never grew;
Fine heather ringes,
Wha will by them noo?

Besoms for a penny,
Ringes for a plack,
Gin ye winna buy them
Tie them on my back,: &.

(Great applause.)

Mr Frost – My friends, as the curtains of the evening are rapidly drawing around us, obscuring from our view the light of Auld Handsel Monday once more, I confess that it will be to me, and I venture to say to all of us, a feeling somewhat akin to sorrow to break up. We have all been so very humorous and exceedingly happy with each other, and no doubt such meetings tend very much, when conducted in an orderly and friendly spirit as present, to feast the mind, and recall back to our memories many days hence, pleasant, if not profitable reflections. I thank you all for your ready compliance to my call of order, and for the honour you have bestowed upon me on this Auld Handsel Monday neighbourly and friendly meeting. These walks into the villages at such seasons of social enjoyment are generally the happiest hours that are spent. Perhaps the changes of place may a little tend to nerve the mind for more vigorous action, or perhaps it is the change of

society. Strangers mingling in the society of old acquaintances give opportunities of a change of ideas, and gave an impulse to each other, as the saying runs, many men, many minds. But especially at this festive season of the year, any person under the influences of a little stimulant, and of what may be termed a combative turn of mind, I would recommend to read the lines above the door of the Prime Minister's House, situated in Maygate Street, when royality graced our ancient city and held court in Dunfermline. I think the words in those days, were liberty of speech was not tolerated then as is now, were –

Sen vord is thrall And thocht is fre, Keip veill thy tonge, I coinsell the.	-	Since words be thrall And thoughts be free, Keep still thy tongue, I counsel thee.

As such seasons as Handsel Monday now such an advice would make a Scot buckle on his armour in a moment, and sing in a voice that for deficient tones would make the very welkin ring,

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

But, nevertheless, there is truly a drop of gall put into the cup of friendship when some men just it would seem contradict their neighbour for contradiction's sake, and will not even on an Auld Handsel Monday occasion endeavour to bridle their temper. It not only destroys their own pleasure, but sends an influence worse than the fox around the whole company. Such individuals I scarcely would not recommend to go even a first-footing, unless that I was sure that before eight o'clock in the morning they would resume their nightcap. But, my friends, there has, to our honour be it said, not one single act nor even a word been done or said to offend: The very opposite has been by all of us manifested. We have indulged in wit and humour of every sort. Song and sentiment has been the order of the day. Gentlemen, I will close with one remark, and it is by no means a wilful neglect – the health of the ladies, who will no doubt soon feel impatient for our safe home coming. (Vociferous applause.)

The company all standing, drank a bumper to the health of the ladies, not omitting our sovereign lady, Queen Victoria, Balmoral Castle. Before leaving, a volunteer sung in noble voice, "There's na luck aboot the house."

The Chairman – Gentlemen, I feel sorrow that we have to take the road so early. Really, this is beyond all anticipation. As we are on our feet we might before parting all join in a verse, say, "Auld Langsyne."

"Ah, ah, stay, stay a minute," bawls out Robie Buist. "Stop, stop!" All silent waiting Robie's humour. "Just ye a' drink my auld grandfather's toast." "It's a' dune, Robie." "Here's a wee drap, Bob, just drink it yoursel', an' we'll a' hear ye." "Will ye!" 'Yes we will." Robie gets the tumbler. "Noo, noo, Mr Ch-Chairman, stop. I was makin' a verse when ye was a' spout in." Mr Frost – "What is your toast and verse, Robert." "Weel, I'll gie ye my toast and verse. It's to Auld Handsel Monday, mind ye – 'May the hinges of friendship never rust.' That's my auld worthy grandfather's toast. Ay, man, I mind aye sin' I wasna aboon the height o' my grannie's stool, I've heard my grandfather sayed, I hundred and thousand o' times, as I hae." Laughter. "Come awa, noo Robin, hae ye yer bit staff na; yonder its standing at the fire." "Na, na, Tam, I'm fine noo. I'll hae my verse oot." "Come on, Robert," said Mr Frost.

Welcome auld carl wi' locks o' gray,
  We hail thy blythe return,
We never saw thee greet nor say
  That man was made to mourn.
But maybe yearly as ye ca'
  Ye may see mony changes,
An' maybe Robie Buist awa,
  That frankly greased your hinges.

"Three times three for Robie." Laughing heartily at Robie's originality of character, the company retired, youth assisting age, and as the common phrase runs, they were a' John Thomson's bairns together.

My friends, to delineate my story on Auld Handsel Monday fully, I will take upon me the liberty of inviting you all to your Handsel Monday supper of sow head, haggis, and greens, and as there will be, if a's weel, from above the psalm of David's mentioned period of days there, you will hear all the news, changes and everything else connected with Dunfermline and suburbs

around for sixty years and more, for they will be there, wi' memories as correct as almanacs.

It's my uncle's house, auld Peter M'Callum, and ony bodie that I bring wi' me is made very welcome. Peter was a pensioner. He had seen mony a sair day's service. Peter had seen, serving his King and defending his country, sights, when he tells his stories, that a bodie can hardly credit. I think mysel' that he has what a bodie may ca'an embellishing turn, and I would just say to ye, no to contradict him, altho' he was to tell you that in Malta he had put a ball through the moon.

We a' enter uncle Peter's. A'thing in a moment tells that it is Auld Handsel Monday. Aunty Betty has a cleanly turn. The house is at once to ony body's e'e a sure index of what aunty is, order and cleanliness. The table was groaning, as I may say, under its load – chappit tatties, sow head, greens, and haggis. The steam rising sent a smell thro' the hale house. Auld uncle gave the blessing.

"Noo bodies," says auntie, "ye may no a' plates the piece, but as there is some o' them muckle and others little, let them that hae the muckle plates just have wi' their neighbour, and ye're plate ye ken, maun just be the oftener filled. A' set too noo; the pat's at my hand, and I'll keep my e'e on ye a'.

"Noo," says uncle Peter, "friends, just need nae mair bidding, it's before ye, an' it's your ain faults if ye dinna mak' a Handsel Monday supper o't.

Well, a supper at Handsel Monday has a fine relish wi' healthy stomachs. Bit o' tastings thro' the day a kind o' whets the stomach and gi'es a bit appetite.

Supper over, and every one pleased wi' the fine, boiled greens, boiled to taffers haggis, as every Scotchman kens, is a sort o' achin' to his stomach, and the sow's head is, as a' bodie kens at that time, just the sort o' medicine to keep you sober.

The tablecloth removed, auntie sets down he guid auld country cheese, and a bit special for the occasion – Dutch or gowdie. The big Handsel Monday bottle, wi' plenty o' juniper berries in't, ony-bodie that tasted it said it was gin, but gin here on gin there it, as Burns said, "Soon wauken'd wit an' kindled lair, and set the brains asteerin'."

As auld uncle was the head o' the house, we made him our chairman, an honour that he wasna expecting, but he was real proud o' the honour, an' rose to his feet, puir bodie, liftin' his bit glass, an' maistly skellin' the half

o't. He said – My friends, I've seen the day, and that ye a'ken, an' seen a'most a' the world; an' I have seen sichts that I wush naebodie to see. Ay, I seen on the field o' Waterloo a British Lancer lift up a bit Frenchman on the end o his lance an' threw him fair ower his shouther. Ay, an' ye may think it a lee, but, ay, yes I, myself, at ae time in the same battle when the order was given, "Charge bayonets, charge," I just put my bayonet through three Frenchmen at one whup, and I couldna draw it oot, and hadna one moment to lose. My officer said, "Well done, M'Allum" At this stage o' speech Peter knocked his glass fair aff the table to splinters. Auntie cries, "Come noo, Pate, cannie, cannie, an' sit doon, you've done fine; broken a guid glass to me, telling awheen big lees about our speetin' Frenchmen three at a time, I would hardly say that I could do that wi' saut herrin'."

At tht Peter sat down. A very hearty laugh took place. Peter's glass was speedily replenished. Peter asked a verse frae auld Huie Gray.

Huie was a man of real common sense, a bodie that a' bodie a kind o' lookit up tae. Huie said that he was nae singer, but he would give them a word or twa about auld Dunfermline, an' gang back 60 years at ony rate. (Applause.)

Huie said that he had a most horrid hatred at cock-fighting – a custom in both our town and villages at this time, and that it ought to be put down by an Act o' Parliament. What a disgrace for men, and for our magistrates, to say that in the heart o' our toun blackguards will be swearin' and fighting cocks; a black-burnin shame; an' no only fighting cocks, but drawin' the badger. Ay, an' what an example is that to the rising generation – shame; their playgrounds, which I hae seen wi' my ain een, a puir harmless cat tied wi' a cord to a stab knocked in the grund, and then settin' dogs on the puir beast to worried. Just only observe thae cock-fechters, look at them on a Handsel Monday afternoon, worse than the puir birds thae hae been fechting. Swearing and hashing ane an anither, carrying awa' hame their bluidy pocks, wi' their killed cocks, half fu', a ' mair, a poor hame-coming to the poor wife an' bairns. And when such conduct is allowed in our town, what an' be expected in our villages? Poor Handsel Monday sport. And will ye believe me, the very village schools are turned into cock-pits at the Handsel Monday time, the schoolmaster getting some o' the killed cocks for the use o' the school. It's a queer-lookin' affair. There are some o' ye here that's as auld's mysel', an' who does it look to see sae much sin an' sae much outward sanctity. The constables gang a' round our streets in the Sabbath

morning a wee afore the bells begin to ring to pick up onie bodie that chance to be hingin about. I mind when I was a wee laddie o' bein' sent ae Sabath morning by my mither wi' a sark to my grannie's. I said, "Mither, I am fear'd to gang for fer o' the seizers." "Well, laddie, if the seizures offer to meddle wi' ye, tell them that yer gang awa' wi' a clean sark to yer grannie, that your mither forgot it last nicht." I awa' my errand, having sense to ken, young as I was, that I was on duty. How does such an outward show tally wi' cock fechtin', badger drawin,' cat worryin', and, in fact, a' thing moistly short o' murder. Huie ended his remarks with this observation, that when learnin' gained strength among the folk these customs – cruel customs – would soon disappear, and he did not, in his conscience, find only fault wi' Robie Burns writing "Holy Willie's Prayer." He thought that if there had been men as able an' far-seein' as Burns, that the bluidy, cruel, unmanly sports, ay, an' the hypocritical, sanctimonious outward shows would sooner disappeared. Huie resumed his seat.

A song was proposed. Tam Glen sang in real style –

> In the days o' langsyne, when we carls were young,
> An' nae foreign fashions among us had sprung;
> When we bakit oor ain bannocks and brewed oor ain yill,
> An' were clad frae the sheep that gaed white on the hill,
> O' the thochts o' thae days gars my auld heart aye fill.

(Applause.) A real centre crack took place among the wives, the men a' joining in conversation. Auld stories were related, and gave a fine relish. One there was full of jokes, proverbs, and, in fact, every sort of amusing and interesting tales – Willie Wylie.

Willie said that he would gie them some anecdotes that for truths past they could depend upon. He would begin with that worthy man, old Ebenezer Brown. He said tht the minister, when he became auld an' frail, got a bit gig an' a cannie auld beast. One day driving awa' on the Great North Road, two young gentlemen on horseback accosted him thus – "Why, old gentleman, does your mare wag her tail so?" The worthy man calmy replied, "For that same reason that you wag yer tongue, weakness."

A minister one day taking a walk in the churchyard came up to the gravedigger, who he knew was accustomed to tak' a mouthfu'. John was digging a grave.

The minister said, “John, that, I think, is a situation well befitting you, and ought to lead you to repentance.”

John looked up to the minister and calmly replied, “Di’ ye no ken sir, that there’s nae repentance in the grave.”

A few years ago in our Old Abbey Churchyard two well-kent ladies were taking the morning air and their morning dram. Coming into the graveyard to an open grave, they drew too near, when all in a moment one of them slipit in. James, the grave-digger, was at another grave opening. On looking around he saw a white mutch appear from the open grave, made a’ haste to gie help. “Weel,” says Jamie, “what are ye doin’ there; you’re surely a wee before your time.” “Oh, oh, help me oot, Jamie.” James got her up, and ga’e a bit laugh saying, “I've helpit monie a ane into their grave, but I never helpit ane oot afore.” There was no exhausting of Mr Wylie of anecdotes and stories.

A song proposed, aunt Bettie sang, “When Adam was first created.”

The evening being far spent, and some of the company having a far distance to go, shaking of hands and invitations to other houses, and as a concluding scene the company all rose to their feet, and joined in singing “Auld Langsyne,” some of them ere parting tripit up merrily – so guid nicht! – guid nicht!

The change of manner is now to the better. Instead of the fighting of cocks – brutalising spectacle – you have on New Year Day now an Ornithological society. An exhibition takes place in the Music Hall every New Year day, when hundreds feast their eyes with delight and spend a very agreeable hour or two gazing with admiration on the feathered race. That is surely a decided change to the better.

It is manifest that the change of holiday from Auld Handsel Monday to New Year’s Day has been effected by the railways. Yes steam has produced great and important changes altogether, changing the face of society and improving many customs.

Temperance societies, great as the obstacles have been in their path of progress, still, by dint of perseverance, they have made progression. It is now 48 years since the first public temperance lecture was delivered. A Mr Cartwright, commonly called the drunken carter or carrier, gave the lecture in St Margaret’s Church. The first tea soiree was held in Maygate Mason Lodge about 47 years ago. Mr William Smith, teacher, Crossford, addressed

the meeting. It caused much talk in those days to see so many all sit down to tea together.

Now these scenes are little to be wondered at, as it is now become a universal custom throughout society.

We have a strong organisation at work to effect a change, or at least attempt to do so, the Free Templars and Good Templars, so no doubt then, at the festive season they do their best to stem the tide of intemperance.

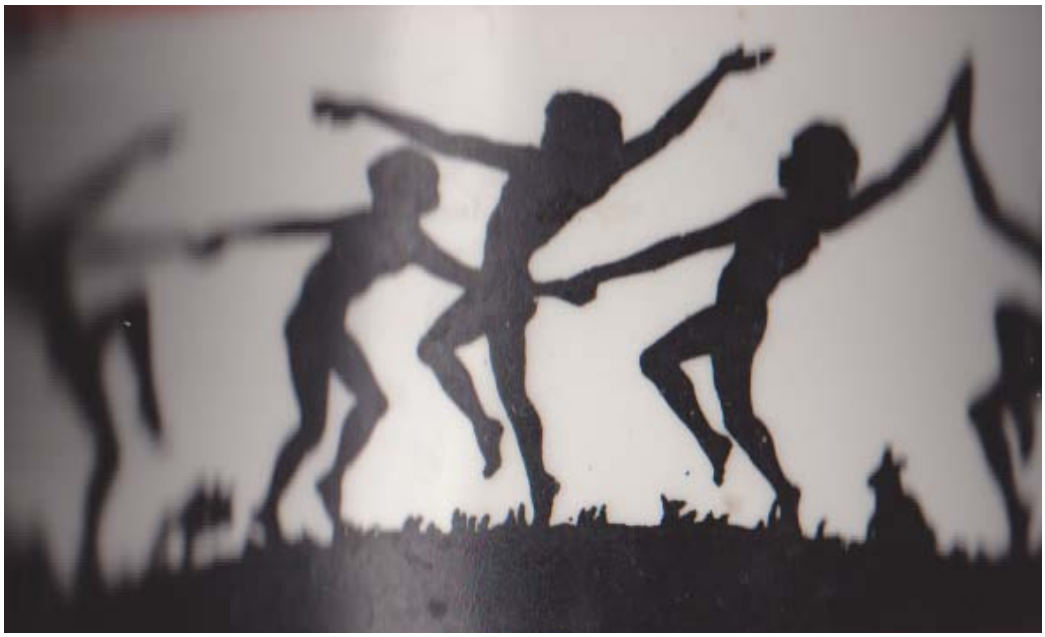
Now, I must not overlook, at the festive season. The attention that some gentlemen bestow upon their poor and helpless neighbours; they strive to soothe their sorrows at such times and elevate their minds a little. The paupers, poor bodies, are not forget. I conclude my story. I have endeavoured to bring the mind to perceive the actual manner in which these days were spent, and I may add that now, as ever, these holidays witness many marriages.

A good New Year to all.

JOSEPHUS.

RANTIN ROVIN ROBIN

DRAWN BY COLIN HUNTER MCQUEEN



HALLOWE'EN

[Poetical Works of Robert Burns by Robert Ford]

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art." – GOLDSMITH.

Upon that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans[a] dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove,[b] to stray an' rove,
Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night:

Amang the bonie winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimplin clear;
Where Bruce[c] ance ruled the martial ranks,
An' shook his Carrick spear;
Some merry, friendly, country-folks
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
An' haud their Hallowe'en
Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin:
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs
Weel-knotted on their garten;
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
Their 'stocks [d] maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' grape an' wale
For muckle anes, an' straight anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wandered thro' the 'bow-kail,'
An' pou't for want o' better shift,
A runt, was like a sow-tail
Sae bow't that night.

Then straight or crooked, yird or name,
They roar an' cry a' throw'ther;
The vera wee-things, toddlin, rin,
Wi' stocks out owre their shouther:
An' gif the custok's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang the, a',
To pou their stalks o' corn;[e]
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behind the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kiutlin in the 'fause-house'[f]
Wi' him that night.

The auld guid-wife's weel-hoordet nits[g]
Are round an' round divided,
An mony lads an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is *Jock*, and this is *me*,
She says in to herself:
He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never ma'ir part;
Till fuff! He started up the lum,
And Jean had e'en a sa'ir heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compared to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out, wi' prideful' fling,
An' her ain fit, it brunt it;
While Willie lap, an' swoor by 'jing,'
"Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house' in her min'.
She pits herself an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin:
Nell's heart was dancin at the view;
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stownins, prie'd her bonie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
An' slips out-by herself:
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' for the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins grapet for the 'bauks,"
And in the 'blue clue'[h] throws then,
Right fear't that night.

An' ay she win't, an' ay she swat –
I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the pat,
Guid L – d! but she was quaukin!
But whether 'twas the deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talking
To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, graunie?
I'll eat the apple at the glass,[i]
I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic't na an aisle brunt
Her braw, new, worset apron
Out thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's-face![j]
I daur you try sic sportin,
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' died deleeret,
On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind't as weel's yestreen –
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fifteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat
An stuff was unco green;
An' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
An' just on Hallowe'en
It fell that night.

"Our 'stibble-rig' was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow:
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed,[k] I mind it weel,
An' he made unco light o't'
But mon a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night.

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck:
For it was a' but nonsense:
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handful' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin:
And ev'ry now an' then, he says,
"Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass
Come after me, an' draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistl'd up "Lord Lennox' March,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sac fley'd an' eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbled wi' a wintle
Our-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld come rinnin out,
An' hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie –
Till stop! She trotted thro' them a';
And wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night?

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen,
To winn here wechts o' naething;"[l]
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
Syne bauldy in she enters:
A ratton rattl'd up the wa',
An' she cry'd L – d preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An pray'd wi' zeal and fevour,
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chane'd the stack he faddom't thrice,[m]
Was timmer-propt for thrawin:
He taks a swirlie auld moss-oak
For some black, grousome carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
Aff's neives that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As cantie as a kitten;
But och! That night, amang the shaws,
She gat a fearful settlin!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin;
Whare three lairds' lan's meet at a burn,[n]
To drip her left sark sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi, bickerin, dancin dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazle
Unseen that night.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
  Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
  Gat up an' ga'e a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap her hool;
  Near lav'rock-height she jumpet,
But mist a fit, an' in' the pool
  Out-owre the lugs she plumpet,
    Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
  The 'luggies'[o] three are ranged;
An' ev'ry time great care is ta'en
  To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
  Sin 'Mar's-year'[p] did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
  He heaved them on the fire,
    In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
  I wat they did na weary;
And unco tales, an' funnie jokes –
  Heir sports were cheap an' cheery:
Till butter'd sowens,[q] wi' fragrant lunt,
  Set a' their gabs a-steerin;
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
  They parted aff careerin
    Fu' blythe that night.

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Note: - Hallowe'en. In a prefatory note to this more than national poem, the author himself says: "The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and customs of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own." Of Hallowe'en itself he says it is "thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands; particularly these aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary."

a. Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis. –R.B.

b. A noted cavern near Colean House, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed, in the country, for being a favourite haunt of the fairies. – R.B.

c. The famous family of tht name; the ancestors of ROBERT, the great deliver of his country, were Earls of Carrick. – R.B.

d. The first ceremony of Hallowe'en is, pulling each a "stock," or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and the shape of the grand object of all their spells-the husband or wife. If any "yird" or earth stick to the root, that is "tocher," or fortune; and the taste of the "custoc," that is, the heart of the stems, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to gie them their

proper appellations, the "runts," are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of people whom chance brings into the house are, according to the priority of placing "runts," the names in question.- R.B.

e. They go to the barnyard, and pull each, at thre several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the "top-pickle," that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question wi come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid. – R.B.

f. When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or we, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, etc., makes a large apartment in the stack, with an opening in he side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this is called a "fause-house." –R.B.

g. Burning the nuts is a favourite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be. – R.B.

h. Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: - Steal out, all along, to the kiln, and darkling, throw into the "pot" a clue of blue yarn; wind it on a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand "Wha hauds?" (i.e., Who holds?) and the answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse. – R.B.

i. Take a candle and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple, before it, and, some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time: the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder. –R.B.

j. A technical term in female scolding. – R.B.

k. Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then – "Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow three." – R.B.

l. This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a "wecht," and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times, and the third time an apparation will pas through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life. – R.B.

m. Taske an opportunity of going unnoticed to a "bear-stack," and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow. – R.B.

n. You go out , one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south running spring, or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and some time near midnight, an apparation, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it. – R.B.

o. Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand; if by chance in the clean water, the future (husband or) wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered. – R.B.

p. 1715 – the year in which the Earl of Mar headed the insurrection.

q. Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Hallowe'en Supper. – R.B. [Poetical Works of Robert Burns by Robert Ford]

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ANNUAL FESTIVAL

ON HANDSEL MONDAY,

IN THE MUSIC HALL.

THE ANNUAL SOIREE of the Dunfermline Total Abstinence Society will take place in the Music Hall,

On Monday Evening, 15th January, 1855,

When addresses will be Delivered by the

Rev. D. JOHNSTON, Glasgow, and the Rev. A. M'AUSLANE,

For the Musical Department they have secured the services of

MISS J. Z. MEIN, AND MR A. LAWRIE,

EDINBURGH;

Mr W. LOCKE and Mr. J. IRVINE.


SCOTLAND FOR EVER !
GOOD LUCK
MAY THE SCENT OF THE HEATHER AND BONNIE BLUE BELL,
WAFT A MESSAGE TO YOU THAT NO WORDS CAN TELL,
MAY THE LINKS IN OUR FRIENDSHIP KEEP STEADFAST AND TRUE,
GOOD FORTUNE AND HEALTH BE EVER WITH YOU !

THE END.