

The PEOPLE'S Voice

Scottish Political Poetry, Song and the Franchise, 1832–1918

Anthology

Poems selected and annotated by:

Professor Kirstie Blair, University of Strathclyde

Professor Gerard Carruthers, University of Glasgow

Erin Farley, University of Strathclyde

Dr Catriona M. M. Macdonald, University of Glasgow

Dr Honor Rieley, University of Glasgow

Dr Michael Shaw, University of Kent

**Part One: Poems relating to the Representation
of the People Acts, 1832**

1. Dark Bonnymuir.

The reform campaigns of the late 1820s and early 1830s were preceded by the Radical War of 1820, also known as the Scottish Insurrection. A week of strikes and agitation was organised between March and April 1820 in order to demand parliamentary and industrial reform. Famously, several of these reformers marched on the Carron ironworks in Falkirk to arm themselves, but they were stopped at Bonnymuir, near Falkirk, where they were arrested. The leaders, John Baird and Andrew Hardie, were then executed in Stirling. Reformers of the 1830s frequently wrote of Baird and Hardie as heroic martyrs of the reform cause, which is reflected in this poem, 'Dark Bonnymuir'. The poem was published as a broadside and is not dated, but it is most likely from the early 1830s. In the first stanza, Caledonia – a personification of the Scottish nation – grieves for her 'poor bleeding country', demanding that it 'hail reformation'. Baird, Hardie and James Wilson (another figure executed for his involvement in the Radical War) are mentioned as the poem calls for the memory of the Radical War agitators to be honoured and their spirit carried forward into the present struggle.

In 1912 this poem was published in *Forward*, a Glaswegian socialist paper edited by Tom Johnston, who later became a Labour MP in 1922 and Secretary of State for Scotland during the second world war. The poem is published with an introductory paragraph which tells us that Keir Hardie, the founder of the Independent Labour Party, recalled hearing this 'old ballad sung about the days of Baird and Hardie' in his childhood. Upon hearing this, Mr Lowden Macartney of the Poet's Box at 203 Overgate, Dundee, sent the ballad to *Forward*.

Michael Shaw

As evening dashed on the western ocean,
Caledonia stood perch'd on the waves of the Clyde,
Her arms wide extended she raised with devotion—
"My poor bleeding country!" she vehemently cried;
"Arise up my country and hail reformation,
"Arise and demand now the rights of our nation,
Behold your oppressors shall meet the desolation,
"That marked the brave victims on dark Bonnymuir.

On the 5th day of April eighteen hundred and twenty,
The great Baird and Hardie did march from their home,
To guard their freedom, home, rights, peace and plenty,
But tyranny conquered and gave them a tomb.
Like traitors they died on the 8th of September,
In the cold silent grave they were consigned to slumber,
But heaven will avenge them let tyrants remember,
And rise up new heroes on dark Bonnymuir.

Though freedom has bled on the field sorely wounded,
Shall liberty perish and die in its bloom?
Shall tyranny triumph? though freedom has grounded
The arms of the heroes that lie in the tomb.

But freedom shall rise to the greatest perfection,
Avenging her wrongs with hard words of correction,
When on my country with filial affection,
I sigh for the martyrs of dark Bonnymuir.

How long shall tyrants usurp over freedom,
How long shall we groan in those vile servile chains?
Arise up my children and sink them like Sodom!
E'er sad desolation reigns over the plains.
Oh, muse on the day when great Wallace was rearing
The broad sword of Scotland, when tyrants were fearing,
At the sound of the trumpet were thousands appearing,
To die or to conquer on dark Bonnymuir.

Those dear sons of freedom, prosperity shall never
Forget Baird and Hardie, who would them disown?
In the breast of their country their memory shall ever,
Be a monument more lasting than sculptured stone.
Remembrance shall dwell on their tragical story,
And point out those heroes who died pale and gory,
Yet heaven shall reward them with bright shining glory,
In regions far distant from dark Bonnymuir.

But why should I pass this great patriot Wilson?
Who died by oppressive and arbitrary laws;
He left his dear Straven with a band of brave heroes,
Resolved to have justice or die for the cause.
But alas! he was taken, while fate seemed to waver,
All bloody his head they did cruelly sever,
But the heart of the country shall reverence for ever,
The fate of great Wilson, and dark Bonnymuir.

No longer the enemies of justice and freedom,
Shall make the sons of Scotia in poverty to mourn,
Our noble patriotic Reformers shall free them;
Oh, how shall we make them a grateful return?
Mechanics shall prosper, and commerce shall flourish,
The horn of plenty our country shall nourish,
When the tyrant and all despots shall perish,
With persecuted freedom, on dark Bonnymuir.

Forward, 6 January 1912.

2. Our Brave Sailor King.

Processions and protests were widespread and large-scale events during the reform agitation of the 1830s; it was estimated that up to 60,000 people attended one pro-reform procession in Glasgow. This song, published on 7 May 1831, was most likely inspired by the reform procession in Glasgow on 2 May 1831, which was organised by the city's trades. Typically of reform processions in the early 1830s, William IV was lauded as a great champion of the cause. William IV was widely believed to be quietly supportive of reform at this time, and he helped facilitate the passage of the Reform Bill in the House of Lords in 1832 by giving his support to the creation of peerages that could be given to reformers. In tune with this wider appreciation of William IV, this poem begins by celebrating 'Our brave Sailor King'. The poem then turns its attention to Scotland and urges the 'Sons of Reform' from the north, south, east and west to rally for reform. It also depicts the festival, processional atmosphere of the event; Glasgow is described as feeling an exaltation it has never known before. The chorus includes a reference to the trades, which is fitting as the *Herald to the Trades' Advocate*, the newspaper in which this poem was published, was established by the committee of trades in Glasgow. The song is set to the Jacobite air 'Wha'll be King but Charlie'.

Michael Shaw

AIR.—"*Wha'll be King but Charlie.*"

CHORUS.

Come muster, men, muster to Glasgow Parade,
Come muster and haste ye to glory!—
Come muster your ranks, men of every trade,
And your names shall be famous in story.

Our brave Sailor King, shout ye all in a ring,
Come loyally forth and surround him;
And wha would nae loudly the fame of him sing,
Why let plagues like to Pharoah's confound him.
He's gallant and free and as brave as can be,
His gallant and brave to defend us;
When Britain retains such a monarch as he
Then shall every blessing attend us.
Chorus.—Come muster, &c.

In the north where the dauntless in action reside,
With their kilts, and claymores, and their plaidies,
On the east and the west of the famous stream Clyde,
Come haste ye to where the parade is.
Come out of the south, all ye Sons of Reform,
Bring forward your thousands in order;
For never till now, whether in calm or in storm
Was the like seen on this side the border!
Come muster, &c.

Here are bands in full chorus, and drum after drum,
There are banners in hundreds round waving;
Here the young and the old, and the fair gladly come,
Who the country from ruin are saving.
Hurl'd down from their height of ambition, the knaves
Who had drenched our heart's-blood to uphold them;
But the banner of liberty gloriously waves,
And down in the mire have we rolled them.
Come muster, &c.

And wha has a right to rejoice as we
Who have sat 'midst oppression contented;
And now when a change so important we see,
We shall all get ourselves represented.
We'll all have a vote for a man to our mind
Who have ten pounds in houses beside 'em;
And though we should grope in the dark like moles blind,
We shall rank up and join the parading.
Come muster, &c.

Did ever our Glasgow—the pride of the west,—
Ere before truly feel exaltation?—
When the fate of the bill was in fact only guessed,
Then they raised up an illumination.
But the fate of the bill and the measure's now heard,
Let our thanks to King William be rendered.
And join the parade, every man, every trade,
And a joyous procession be tendered.

Chorus.—Come muster, then, muster and join the parading,
Come muster and haste ye glory;
Come muster your ranks men of every trade,
And your names shall be famous in story.

By C. Taylor.

Herald to the Trades' Advocate, and Co-operative Journal, 7 May 1831.

3. Milesian Melody.—No. XII.
"They May Rail at the Bill."—By Daniel O'Connell.

This poem appeared in the conservative *Glasgow Courier* in 1831, and it served to warn its readers about some of the consequences of parliamentary reform. The speaker of the poem is a parody of the reformer Daniel O'Connell, an Irish political leader who campaigned for Catholic emancipation and the repeal of the Acts of Union of 1800. O'Connell is vilified throughout the poem, and his support for reform is used to attack the Reform Bill – he states that he supports the Bill because he believes it will help repeal the Union. O'Connell is portrayed as hoping to have England 'undone' and to 'pull down the Church'. He is also styled as 'Daniel, Dictator of Ireland', before whom no Saxon 'shall dare to appear'. This poem stokes fears by casting O'Connell as a threat to the British state and Protestantism, and it encourages the reader to reject the Reform Bill, which (the poem implies) will help further his cause.

Michael Shaw

Air—"They may rail at this life."

They may rail at THE BILL—from the hour I first read it,
I found it a bill full of mischief and guile;
In the pride of my heart, to *my* Senate I said it,
Oh, this is the thing for the Emerald Isle?
As sure as it passes, ould England's undone.
And "Erin, my country," "great, glorious, and free!"
Church and State it will ruin, as sure as a gun;
Oh, this Bill is the Bill, boys, for you and for me.

In the Parliament House, each new Member may bring them
Fresh blarney and prate;—but 'tis all in my eye;
We'll the *Union* repeal!—to the Devil we'll fling them;
For who should give laws to green Erin, but I?
First the Church we'll pull down, and all tithes we'll abolish;
Never more upon heretic mitres you'll see,
When I've given the State it's last radical polish:—
Oh, this Bill is the Bill, boys, for you and for me.

By that star of the West, in whose luminous splendour
I hail my young glories just bursting to view,
The Saxon, his iron rule forced to surrender,
In tears—tears of blood— this Reform Bill shall rue;
And Britain bewail, from *her* diadem torn,
"The first flow'r of the earth, and first gem of the sea;"
Whilst Erin, my country, shall laugh her to scorn:—
Oh, this Bill is the Bill, boys, for you and for me.

As for these silly dolts at the head of the Nation,
How neatly I worried them out of their wits!

Their big day of judgment was all botheration—
My frowns fairly frightened the fools into fits.
Only think what a world we shall have of it here,
When DANIEL, Dictator of Ireland you see;
On "*the sod*" not a Saxon shall dare to appear:—
Oh, this Bill is the Bill, boys, for you and for me.

Glasgow Courier, 19 May 1831.

4. The New Chevy Chase.

This long poem was one of the most popular pro-reform poems of 1831, featuring on broadsides as well as in the *Glasgow Chronicle*, the *Loyal Reformers' Gazette* and the *Glasgow Evening Post*. It is a reworking of the traditional 'Ballad of Chevy Chase', the story of a hunting party in the Anglo-Scottish borderlands which sparks a conflict between Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, and the Earl of Douglas. The poet takes advantage of the fact that many of the names and places mentioned in the original had modern counterparts associated with the reform movement: for example, the Whig Prime Minister Earl Grey had been MP for Northumberland from 1786 to 1807 before being succeeded by Hugh Percy, Earl of Northumberland. The poem also weaves in Scottish historical references, as the Civil War general James Graham, Marquis of Montrose (1612–1650) is contrasted with James Graham, 3rd Duke of Montrose (1755–1836), the Justice General, and has his contemporary parallel in the reformer James Graham, Baronet of Netherby. The main action of the poem takes place not in the Borders, however, but in Lanarkshire, amid the reform agitation that occurred during the 1831 General Election. The sitting MP, the Hon. Charles Douglas (1775–1848), who retained his seat at this election before losing it in the first post-reform election the following year, is portrayed as a 'recreant' for voting against reform, thereby abandoning the role played by Douglas in the original ballad and failing to defend 'Scotland's rights'.

Honor Rieley

I.

God save the King and bless the land,
In plenty, joy, and peace,
And grant henceforth that *foul debate*
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

II.

The Rich Duke of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure of our goods and land,
For seven more years to take.

III.

To drive his slaves with threat and bribe,
Duke Percy took his way,¹
To buy our rights he did subscribe,
And vanquish Noble Grey.²

IV.

With three times fifty Borough Lords,
All plunderers of the people,
To buy our liberties for gold,
And sell them out for triple.

¹ Hugh Percy, 3rd Duke of Northumberland (1785-1847).

² Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1764-1845).

V.

These hounds ran swiftly through the land,
The timid to alarm,
And to their cry the liveri'd knaves
Responsive called—to arm.

VI.

When tidings to King William came,
Within the shortest space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Had risen at Chevy Chase.

VII.

Now God be with us, said our King,
Sith 'twill no better be;
I trust I have within my realm
Five hundred as good as he.

VIII.

Yet shall not Boroughmongers say,
But I will vengeance take,
And be revenged upon them all,
For my brave people's sake.

IX.

This vow full well the King performed,
Within the House of Lords,
When with self-crowned Majesty,
He quell'd their war of words.

X.

Hence ye mis-representatives
Of my true-hearted People,
Not half of you they should send back
To old St. Stephen's chapel.

XI.

This news was brought to Edinburgh,
Where Melville once did reign,
That William, with his own right hand,
Had Gascoigne's faction slain.³

XII.

Oh, heavy news, Montrose did say;

³ Isaac Gascoyne (1763–1841), British Army officer and Tory politician.

The Justice General he—
Now much I dread in Scotland I
Shall general justice see.

XIII.

Of old Montrose, for tyrants rose,
For liberty, Argyll;
Argyll's submission to Montrose,
'Gainst liberty were vile.

XIV.

When Scotland's long lost rights to claim,
All Scotland's voice did sound,
And Percy, as of yore, our foe—
Ah! where was Douglas found.

XV.

Alas the ancient blood extinct
A recreant—Percy joins—
Who never sure, if deed show proof,
Was sprung from Douglas' loins.⁴

XVI.

Where are the men of Cliddesdale,
Who dy'd the silver Tweed,
With Percy's blood for Scotland's rights—
True Douglas at their head.

XVII.

Oh Christ! my very heart doth break
For Douglas' woful plight—
For ne'er till now, the heart and spear
Deserted Scotland's right.

XVIII.

Like tidings to fair Glasgow came,
But not in such short space,
Tho' Patriot zeal outstript the Mail,
And fairly won the race.

XIX.

And here I would not have it told,
To Richmond's Duke for shame,⁵
That Edinbro's Mail should reach at One—

⁴ The MP for Lanarkshire, Charles Douglas, who voted against the Reform Bill.

⁵ Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond (1791–1860).

And Glasgow's not the same.

XX.

For Glasgow hails her Gracious King,
With universal praise—
Her freemen shouting—countless crowd—
Her Streets that joyful blaze.

XXI.

The Rottenborough— Melville rid—
Discordant with the nation,
Would neither order—or forbid—
Public Illumination.

XXII.

A few Glass-grinders sallied forth,
MacAdam stored their pouch,
The whole Police went straight to bed—
As broken windows vouch.

XXIII.

The Judge's windows once were broke,
All for the Douglas' cause,—
But Hamilton is now the name
That heads the people's cause.

XXIV.

Since wealth thus gained, has been bestowed,
The people's rights to buy,—
Indignant Clydesdale— for Reform—
Has raised a dreadful cry.

XXV.

See fifty-thousand fighting men,
On Lanark marching all;
Their peaceful voice like murmuring Clyde,
Their shout like Corra's Fall.

XXVI.

Free men of ten and fifty pounds,
Bestride their Clydesdale Bays;
Such men and horse of bone and blood.
All Scotland's pride shall raise.

XXVII.

And who are they that dare usurp
The rights of men like these;

Some feeble foreign mercenaries,
Some sordid slaves for fees.

XXVIII.

See the pale troops from Edinburgh,
Of Parchment Cuirassiers;
Each for a sword in his right hand,
A brandish'd goose quill wears.

XXIX.

Their Douglas raised from their own ranks,
Mounted upon an Ass,
Rode foremost of the Company,
His armour shone like glass.

XXX.

With that there came an arrow keen,
Out of an English bow
Which struck their leader to the heart
A deep and deadly blow.⁶

XXXI.

The gallant Graham of Netherby,
A Trident he did wield,
At sight of which the Parchment Horse
All shy'd and fled the field.

XXXII.

They crowded fast and galloped off,
Soon at their Desks were set,
Their grey goose quills soon turned to pens
In their Ink-stands were wet.

XXXIII.

Next day did many voters' wives
Their husbands sore bewail;
They wash'd their griefs with Toddy down,
Because they'd turn'd tail.

XXXIV.

Deserters dined on their desserts,
Instead of solid dishes;
For by this woful change of parts,
They lost the loaves and fishes.

⁶ On election day in Lanark, a riot broke out and Charles Douglas was pelted with stones and cut 'behind the ear' with broken glass (*Glasgow Herald*, 16 May 1831).

XXXV.

Then stept a Dog latin Poet forth,
Sir Walter was his name,
Who said, I would not have it told
To William our King for shame.

XXXVI.

For if to Scotland he should come,
Our selves we must present;
And when we kneel we're sure to feel,
Our Treason he'll resent.

XXXVII.

God prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safeties all;
And grant that vile corruption's rule
Quite bloodlessly may fall.

Glasgow Chronicle, 2 May 1831.

Note: some other versions, like the one published in the *Loyal Reformer's Gazette* on 25 June, do not include stanzas 35 and 36 about 'Sir Walter'.

5. Che Sara, Sara. *An excellent New Song.*

It was a common trend in this period to appropriate Robert Burns's verse, both for reform and anti-reform poetry. Although the set tune for this poem is not explicitly stated, the poem is very clearly a play on 'Is there for Honest Poverty' (also known as 'A man's a man for a' that'). The sentiment of equality espoused in Burns's song would have appealed to the reformers and they try to inject this spirit into the poem. The poem aims its fire at the corrupt elite of society; for instance, the boroughmongers (MPs of constituencies with tiny electorates or none at all) are styled as the 'faes' (foes). The Lords are also subject to attack in this poem, as they were in many 1830s reform poems, because the House of Lords repeatedly prevented the passing of the Reform Bill. Like 'Our Brave Sailor King' (poem 2), King William is styled as 'Our patriot King' who will save the people from the anti-reformers, as will several Whig politicians.

Michael Shaw

Is there for boroughmongering might,
Wha hangs his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave!—his qualms we slight,
An' dare be blythe for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Right reverend drones, an' a' that,
Our patriot King will to us cling,
An' bang our faes for a' that.

What though the doughty Marquis fight,
To quell Reform, an' a' that,
An' poor Sir Charles and Co. unite
Their wits an' wiles, an' a' that,
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their fishwife slang, an' a' that,
Wi' Grey and Brougham, an' guid Lord John,⁷
We'll baulk them yet for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a Lord,
Wha storms an' stamps, an' a' that,
Though *country's weal* is aye his word,
He's but a knave for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His vested rights, an' a' that,
We'll teach him sune to change his tune,
An' get our ain for a' that.

⁷ Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1764-1845); Henry Brougham (1778-1868) and John Russell, 1st Earl Russell (1792-1878).

Let lordlings rave, and bishops rant,
An' ban the Bill, an' a' that,
There's ane wha sune can patents grant
To nobler men than a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their froth an' fume, an' a' that,
Will ne'er make sic a king forsake
His people's guid, an' a' that.

Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle, 30 July 1831.

6. Thirty-Two.

It is and was not unusual for a newspaper to print a digest of the chief events of the year either at the end of December or at the beginning of a new year in January. Here, that traditional journalistic practice takes a poetic form in the *Paisley Advertiser*, with reflections on 1831 and anticipations for 1832. One of the chief matters 1831 had left 'undone' was, of course, the Reform Bill. Like many poets, the agitation for the franchise in Britain is set firmly within an international context as the poet reflects on:

- France: Louis Philippe had styled himself king of the French in 1830 following the 'July Revolution' – the 'glorious three days' referred to in the third stanza.
- Belgium: Leopold I was a German prince of the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld who became the Belgian king after the country acquired its independence in 1830. He was crowned 'King of the Belgians' in July 1831. Leopold married George IV's daughter, Princess Charlotte, in 1816, and the Palladian mansion of Claremont (Surrey) was their family home, retained by Leopold following Charlotte's death in 1817 until his departure for Belgium in 1831.
- Brazil: Pedro I of Brazil abdicated in April 1831 in order to re-establish his hold on Portugal. The association between the House of Burgundy and the throne of Portugal goes back to the seventeenth century.
- Poland: The November Uprising (1830-1831) against the Russian Empire was crushed in the winter of 1831. It was the focus of a number of poems in the Paisley press at this time.
- China: escalating tensions with the Chinese Qing dynasty would eventually lead to the First Opium War in 1839-1842.
- USA: free trade was the focus of debate and discussion in this period (particularly in relation to textiles), spawning publications such as the *Free Trade Advocate/ Banner of the Constitution*. See Condry Raguette, *The Principles of Free Trade* [1835], Essay No 78 (12 January 1831), for details relating to the character 'Jonathan' appearing here.
- Ireland: Daniel O'Connell, having led the successful fight for Catholic emancipation in 1829, turned his attention to the repeal of the Act of Union (1801). The reference to alcohol here touches upon O'Connell's connections with the drinks trade: his son acquired the Phoenix Brewery in Dublin in 1831.

Catriona M.M. Macdonald

Thy journey is brought to a close Thirty one,
To thy tomb thou now must go:
If asked, would I travel thee over again,
I would promptly answer, No,
Though of joys though hast given me ample store,
Yet I willingly say adieu,
And transfer all my joys and my sorrows o'er
To thy rival Thirty-two.

With bustling activity thou hast gone by,
Many jobs thou hast begun,
But many of these, thou canst never deny,
Thou art leaving quite undone.

On this day, which closes thy busy career,
We will take a transient view,
And examine the light in which things appear,
Ere we enter on Thirty-two.

Our neighbours in France with their physical force,
Expected their trials o'er,
But their "Glorious three days," have left them worse
By far, than they were before.
All those who love changes, and disregard law,
Will begin their task anew,
And a *bas la noblesse, les pretres, et le Roi*, - down with the nobility, the priests and the king
Will be sung in Thirty-two.

Of the various crowns sent a-begging around,
One the brows of Leopold adorns,
He should not have changed his good English crowns,
For a poor one begirt with thorns.
From what he has seen, since to reign he began,
We think he will grant it true,
That his Claremont was better in Thirty one
Than Brussels in Thirty-two.

Of the rich and resplendent Brazilian crown,
Don Pedro has lost his hold,
But unwilling from greatness to topple down,
He comes to reclaim the old
Betwixt the possessor, and this rival Don,
A struggle will soon ensue,
And who is to sit on Braganza's throne,
Must be told by Thirty-two.

Of Poland's brave sons, who their armour assumed,
Their liberty to regain,
To a patriot's grave, some thousands are doomed,
And some to a galling chain.
If courage and bravery, honour and right,
Had met with what is their due,
The flag of Freedom would have gladdened the sight
At Warsaw, in Thirty-two.

Our comerce with China has got a sad blow—
The Emperor Tching fo Tchee,
Unless we submissively kiss his great toe,
Wont give us a chest of Tea.
We hope, though his vows may be somewhat rash,
He will keep to his threatenings true,

In far better times we dispens'd with such trash,
And why not, in Thirty-two?

Has that humbug "Free Trade" extended west?
No, Jonathan's no such fool,
As to suffer his weavers to starve in rest
While he struts in British wool.
All are busy and happy, well fed and content,
And are asking what they'll do,
To get the proceeds of their light taxes spent
In the year of Thirty two.

O'Connell in Ireland with logic profound,
Keeps the cry 'Repeal' alive,
Agitation has gained fifteen shillings a pound,
But he wants the other five.
A Parliament assembled in College green—
No tythes to the parsons due—
Scotch whisky abandoned for Irish potheen,
Are the hopes of Thirty-two.

The attention of England is all engrossed,
By Cholera, and the Bill—
Though the one should be caught, and the other be lost,
The world will move on still.
May reform first of all at home begin,
And with hearts warm, leal and true,
Let the motto, "Fear God and honour the King,"
Be our one in Thirty two

Paisley Advertiser, 31 December 1831.

7. The Spirit of Toryism, As Displayed at the Late Literary Dinner to the Ettrick Shepherd.

This poem, published in the stridently pro-reform *Scots Times* newspaper, attempts to claim Robert Burns as a proto-reformer, and mocks those anti-reformers who celebrate Burns but are no friends of liberty. The speaker states that every year he drains a bowl of 'whisky-punch' in memory of Burns, and he is full of joy to hear that some Tories are doing so too. However, when he attends a dinner for James Hogg (the Ettrick Shepherd), which is presumably also a Burns Supper, he finds it disconcerting to see Hogg, the Duke of Buccleuch, and the rest of the 'Tory throng' not actually commemorating Burns but just marking their 'hate of a Patriot King'. This patriot king is King William IV, who was broadly supportive of parliamentary reform. Instead of celebrating the king, the group celebrate the Duke of Wellington and John Wilson Croker – key figures in the anti-reform movement. Indeed, the 'Tory throng' are also described as 'borough-born patriots', implying that they are from rotten burghs (constituencies with tiny electorates), which the reformers were hoping to eradicate. At the end of the poem, the speaker, 'wishing to heaven I had never been there', strolls away from the Tory gathering. This poem earlier appeared in *The Glasgow Chronicle* (6 February), where it was attributed to *The Globe*, a London newspaper – an indication that the association of Burns with radical politics was occurring on a national, as well as a local, level in the lead-up to the passage of the Reform Bill.

Michael Shaw

Every year of my life do I drain a bowl
Of good whisky punch, as the day returns
Which first gave birth to the glorious soul
Of Liberty's chosen minstrel, Burns!

And this year 'twas joy to my heart to think
That even a Tory could help to twine
A wreath for the brow of the Bard, and drink
The memory proud of that soul divine.

Yet I had my misgivings at first, 'tis true,—
For, seeing the Shepherd of Ettrick there,
I thought of the liberal Duke of Buccleugh,
And the patrons who maddened the Poet of Ayr!

'Well, well! they are here," said I, "and sure
"They come but to honour the God-born art,
"And honour to them for that wish most pure!"
How little I knew of a Tory's heart!

Not the genius and woes of the illustrious dead,
Nor the beauty and glory of fadeless song,
Nor the wish to shed light round a living head,
Had muster'd the cold-blooded Tory throng.

But with "sweltering venom" and vile regard,
Their paltry pœans they came to sing,
On the natal day of a Patriot Bard,
To mark their hate of a Patriot King.

And—worthy of hearts and minds like theirs—
They offered the Queen an affectionate shout,
As though it formed part of her Royal cares
That Croker was cross, and the Baronet "out."

And Wellington, too — a name that tells
Of valour and triumph to English ears,
Was hauled by the throng with infuriate yells,
The mingling tones of their hopes and fears.

Then the Spouting-club pupils who, one by one,
Have lorded and led the slumbering house,
Gave terrible proof that 'tis ponderous fun
When prozers will prate though unblest with nous.

So I muttered my curses—not loud, but deep,
And d—d this jumble of lord and slave;
But as usual, my rage I contrived to steep
In a desperate pull at the Lethean wave!

Till the borough-born patriots had bawled their share,
And the Porchester poets had said their say—
When, wishing to heaven I had never been there,
I finished my bottle and strolled away!

Scots Times, 11 February 1832.

8. Task for Anti-Reformers.

The *Ayr Advertiser* was the most prominent pro-reform newspaper in Ayr in the 1830s, and it printed several pro-reform poems including 'Task for Anti-Reformers'. The speaker of this parodic poem is an anti-reformer who hopes to 'stop the progress of the Bill.' The poem's first two stanzas ask an unnamed individual to prove their strength in various ways (for example, they are instructed to 'quench Etna with a cup of tea') to demonstrate that they can overcome the pro-reform movement. In doing this, the poem presents the reform movement as an unstoppable, almost natural, force. In the final stanza, the speaker instructs this individual to manipulate some key reformers to change their position and oppose the bill; one such task is to make the Radical MP Joseph Hume 'forget his country's weal'. The speaker also asks his hearer to 'still woman's tongue', suggesting that women may have been influential in the reform movement. The poem later appeared, under the title 'Tasks for the Anti-Reformers', in the *Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle*.

Michael Shaw

"Go forge me fetters that will bind
"The rage of the tempestuous wind;
Sound with a needleful of thread,
The depth of ocean's stormy bed;
Snap like a twig, the tough oak tree,
Quench Etna with a cup of tea:
In such manœuvres show your skill,
Then stop the progress of the Bill!

With Lady's veil, at Corra linn,
Go stem the Clyde and hush its din;
Proud Arthur's seat, from Lothian's plain
With one fell kick send to the main.
The waters of the Forth divide,
Pile wave on wave on either side,
That oyster wives their creels may fill,
Then stop the progress of the Bill!

Make Hume forget his country's weal,
Reformer make Sir Robert Peel,
Make Brougham and Grey their trust abuse,⁸
Make Boroughmongers bribes refuse;
Make priests without their stipend preach,
Or gratis act—the lawyer Leach,
Still woman's tongue, and curb her will,
Then stop the progress of the Bill!

W. A.

Ayr Advertiser, or West Country Journal, 24 May 1832.

⁸ Henry Brougham (1778-1868) and Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1764-1845).

9. [Up John Bull and clear your brows]

In May 1832, a parliamentary and social crisis broke out, now known as the 'Days of May'. After the Tories successfully blocked the Third Reform Bill in the House of Lords, the pro-reform Whig government fell, which bred anxiety among reformers across the country, and led to social unrest and rioting. However, the Duke of Wellington failed to form a Tory government and Earl Grey's Whigs were reinstated on 15 May 1832. This song, set to the tune of Walter Scott's 'Donald Caird', reflects the resurgent confidence of the reform movement. It appeared in a *Scotsman* report on 'Reform Meetings' that were held throughout Scotland. We are told that, following a Kirkcaldy meeting, a party was held to celebrate the return of the Whig government, and this song was sung there. The song addresses 'John Bull', 'Irish Pat' and 'Caledonians', and advises them to drink to celebrate the return of Grey's government. We are told that the 'boroughmonger loon and Bishop' have been overcome: such denunciations of bishops were common in reform poetry around this time as the Church of England bishops in the House of Lords had voted against the second reading of the Reform Bill. The *Scotsman* report notes that the song came from the *London Gazette Extraordinary*, although the song is written in Scots.

Michael Shaw

(Tune—"Donald Caird.")

Up John Bull and clear your brows,
'Tis not blood but wine that flows:
Irish Pat, my trusty fellow,
Go lay bye your big shillelah:
Caledonians!—bauld and fierce,
Naething now but barrels pierce,
And drink and shout through brugh and glen,
Earl Grey's come back again.

Far owre guid to be a lord—
Grey's "a man"—he keeps his word;
Preaches aye frae the same text,
Tho' King and kimmer baith be vext.
Boroughmonger loon and Bishop,
God be praised! he'll fairly dish up;
The butcher tyke o' Waterloo
May bid gude e'en to glory now.

kimmer – wife or female friend

Grey come back! quick pass the liquor,
Drink though fathom deep ilk bicker;
A' wha like your country weel,
Drink—your man is true as steel—
True is every soul that's near him,
Brougham's there—nae doubt you'll hear him:
Russell, Althorp, a' your men

O' honesty, are back again!⁹

Scotsman, 26 May 1832.

⁹ Lord John Russell (1792-1878) and John Spencer, Viscount Althorp (1782-1845).

10. The Flogged Soldier.

Supporting the reform cause could prove controversial in some professions. This poem refers to Alexander Sommerville of the Royal Scots Greys, who was also a radical journalist. After publishing a letter that revealed the reformist sympathies of fellow soldiers and their discontent over how reformers had been treated, Sommerville received one hundred lashes. This fact became a public scandal and *The Reformers' Gazette*, a Glasgow periodical, published many articles supporting Sommerville; it also ran a public subscription for him. This poem reflects *The Reformers' Gazette's* support for Sommerville, referring to those who administered his punishment as 'savage souls' who defile 'the glory of our native isle'. The poem also references the widespread public outcry against his flogging, and it states that the Scots will hold him dear and stand behind him. Another poem on Sommerville, 'Address to A. Sommerville, Scots Greys', also published in *The Reformers' Gazette*, describes him as an 'injur'd patriot'.

Michael Shaw

Shall silence with the Muses reign,
Or other themes their powers constrain,
And render thus the call in vain,
 To wake for injured Sommerville?

Methinks I see the son of song,
Of tender heart and feeling strong,
That glowed for right, that spurned at wrong,
 Endure the lash of cruelty!

The bloody scourge he mutely bears,
The tender flesh it rudely tears,
The blood streams forth—his visage wears
 The veil of sad pallidity.

He bleeds, alas! unknown to those
Whose love for him most dearly glows,
And thousands now that o'er his woes
 Deep melt in tender sympathy.

They melt, and burn with bitter ire,
While duty calls for anger's fire
To glare against the dark desire,
 That stole to such atrocity.

Ye savage souls who thus defile
The glory of our native isle,
Our worthy daughters ne'er shall smile
 On sons of such barbarity.

O justice, mark the hated crew,

And while the deed demands the due,
With eager eye their steps pursue,
 And strike them with severity.

And, Sommerville, arise and sing,
High soaring on the muse's wing;
And let thy notes through Scotland ring,
 The land of thy nativity.

Our gallant sons thy song shall hear,
Our daughters fair shall lend an ear,
And all in heart shall hold thee dear:
 Thy blood shall bring thee victory.
 J. FALCONER.

Kilsyth, July, 1832.

Reformers' Gazette, 14 July 1832.

11. Reform Song.

After the Whig government was reinstated following the 'Days of May', the Reform Bill was given royal assent on 7 June 1832. Following this news, a proliferation of poems and songs were written to commemorate the event, of which this broadside song is an example. The speaker asks 'sons of Scotia' to 'raise your voice / With shouts of exaltation', to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill. The poem applauds the work of the Whigs, who are portrayed as releasing the people from slavery; John Maxwell and the Paisley 'folk' who elected him are also praised (Sir John Maxwell of Pollok was elected as the MP for Paisley in 1832; his son became Member for Lanarkshire in the same election). Reform is then described as a stepping stone towards repealing the Corn Laws. There are no publication details given on this poem, so we cannot be certain of where or when it was published, but there is a handwritten note on one copy of the broadside in the National Library of Scotland, '10 Aug't 1832', which may refer to the publication date.

Michael Shaw

Sons of Scotia raise your voice
With shouts of exaltation,
The Bill is past, we have at last
Free trade throughout the nation.

Russel & Brougham, Althorp & Hume,
Laboured both late and early!
The Champion Grey has won the day,
Now he has beat them fairly.

The last debate that did take place,
The twelfth day of July, man,
No longer knaves will keep us slaves,
The contest it is by, man,

Yon ten pound voters, now I hope,
You will have no objection,
To choose a few candidates it is true,
For the incoming Election.

The Paisley folk have gained applause,
From friend and each relative,
For choosing Maxwell of the Shaw,
For their Representative.

The Corn Bill, come oft it will,
And every cursed taxation,
Reformers they may bless the day,
They gained the reformation.

The Reformers brave, their flags did wave,

Their drums did beat an' a', man,
The bells will ring and folks will sing,
Brave Grey has waur'd them a', man.

Fill up your glass, round let it pass,
Since we the day have seen, man,
That we'll be free from tyranny,
Since Grey has waur'd them a', man.

12. A Canvassing Episode.

Few poems concerning the 1832 Reform Bill agitation comment on the role of women and this poem is especially rare in foregrounding female participation in the anti-reform campaigns. An explanatory note is included alongside the poem to give context: 'For some weeks past several genteelly-dressed young women have made a practice of annoying respectable shopkeepers, by haunting their shops and threatening them with loss of custom, should they vote for a Reform Candidate'. This poem focuses on one such woman, who instructs a shopkeeper to vote for 'Mr Blair' – Forbes Blair, the Tory candidate for the Edinburgh seats at the 1832 General Election. When she finds out that this shopkeeper has pledged his vote to the Whigs (Francis Jeffrey and James Abercromby) she threatens to withdraw her custom. The poem mocks this Tory tactic of intimidating local businessmen.

Michael Shaw

The lady lifts her parasol, and eke her reticule,
And forth she trips a shopping in the morning bright and cool;
The mercer loses patience as he turns his ribbons o'er,
And but for hopes of money he would show her to the door.

Alas, his hopes are bootless, for he listens with a stare
To the lisp of her silver voice—"you'll vote for Mr Blair."
The mercer he looks up at first, and then again looks down,
And the lady's brow of polish'd white is gath'ring to a frown:

The mercer blushes fiery red, and then again turns pale,
And silent on the counter spreads of silk a lustrous bale;
But his hopes thus to evade her are as castles in the air,
For with tiny silvery sternness she repeats—"you'll vote for Blair."

Then into speech reluctantly breaks forth the wilful dumby,
"He's sorry, but he's pledged his vote to Jeff. and Abercromby."
Cheek, brow, and neck, are crimson'd o'er, and a dark eye flashes fire,
And its thus outspeaks the lady in the fervour of her ire:

"Go sell your silks to Radicals, your flowers to low born drabs,
"Reformers' goods shall ne'er pollute patrician marble slabs;
"There's Lady —, and Mrs —, my cousin Jane, and I,
"Will all go naked, ere our dress from naughty men we buy."

The mercer quakes, and looks aghast, as forth the lady bounces,
And the street re-echoes to the shake of her indignant flounces,
Before her angry rushing each sturdy Celt gives way,
And open mouthed looks after her, in horror and dismay.

R. P.

Scotsman, 4 August 1832.

13. Fables from Ancient Authors, or Old Saws with Modern Instances.

By Peter Pilpay, *Gent.*

No. IV.— The Blackamoor.

The editor of the short-lived journal in which this poem appears, *The Ten Pounder*, was Peter Brown, who identified himself as a 'ten pounder': 'one of those who have been called into political existence, as it were, by the great measure which has lately given a new character to public affairs'. The Reform Bill ensured that those men who paid an annual rent of £10 had the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Despite now being enfranchised, Brown was a critic of reform and was resoundingly opposed to the Whigs and those calling for more reform, which is evident throughout *The Ten Pounder* and in this poem. The poem begins with a description of an Ethiopian slave, who is portrayed as an efficient worker in comparison to his white 'brethren'. The master then decides to apply a lotion to make the slave, described as an 'Admirable Crichton' in reference to the sixteenth-century Scottish polymath of that name, white. Other slaves are then brought to scrub the slave and he dies. The poem concludes with a stanza, titled 'Moral': the moral of the poem is that reform is like the soap and water used to scrub the slave (who symbolises the constitution). In other words, the robust constitution will be destroyed by too many attempts to change and reform it. It is noteworthy that this poem was written the year before the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833.

Michael Shaw

"*Stava bene, ma pu star meglio, sto que.*"

I was well, but, wishing to be better, here I lie.

It happen'd once a worthy cit,
Whose wealth was greater than his wit,
But who, like those that causeway hell,
Whate'er he did, *intended* well,
A swinging sum of money gave
In barter for an Ethiop slave.
This sooty infidel was stout—
A bustling fellow, in and out;
His ribs so hoop'd, his chest so round,
His limbs so stark, his wind so sound,
A man with half an eye might see
The Black could do the work of three.

And so it proved; a smarter strapper
Did never curry steed in stable;
And never flunky half so dapper
Flitted around a dinner table.
He could hew wood and trim a chin—
Sow, reap, and bring the harvest in;
Could kill a pig, and bake and brew—
Make old clothes look as well as new—
Could manufacture jam and jelly—

Mend broken glass and break a filly—
Grow cucumbers and manage fruit—
Play on the fiddle and the flute—
In short, it would take long to tell
How much he *could* do, and how well.

But his wise master took a notion,
That, since his Black was black as night,
There ought to be some wash or lotion
To make him, like his neighbours, white.
The Black outvied in work, 'twas true,
His brethren of a fairer hue;
While *they* wax'd lazy and perspir'd,
The Black was active and untir'd;
They blunder'd right and left, while he
From scrape and scath kept ever free:
Upright in heart, in labour fervent—
Quite an invaluable servant.
But still this Admirable Crichton
Of household flags, was not a *white* one;
And of a snowy skin, his owner
Resolv'd to prove himself the donor.
'Twere difficult to guess the reason
Of love of change so out of season:
Perhaps some envious fellow slave
First to his lord the counsel gave;
Or, it may be, the whim was bred
In his own soft and simple head:
No matter which—it was his *will*
To whitewash Tauro's cuticle.

The slaves assembled—tubs were brought—
Soap, acids, and enough of water—
Lukewarm and tepid, cold and hot—
To scare a seal or swamp an otter:
Nor lack'd there aught that purifies—
Brushes of every sort and size—
Flesh scrapers, sponges, pumice-stone—
Bristles of steel in beds of bone.
God help poor Tauro in his tub!
From morn to night 'twas scrub—scrub—scrub—
They splash'd and dash'd the water o'er him,
And with their cursed engines tore him,

Till, what between the cold and wet,
And malice of that hellish set—
What with the loss of *that same skin*

His master deem'd a blot and sin—
Yielding at once both health and hide,
Poor Tauro sicken'd, sunk, and died!

MORAL.

Reader! a moral lesson we may gather,
Nor haply useless, from these idle rhymes—
Not to join innovating fools, but rather
Content us with the colour of the times.
Of the proud CONSTITUTION of our land
The worthy *slave* may for an emblem stand:
Let BRITONS, represented by his *master*,
Look sharply, lest they share in his disaster;
And find, too late, REFORM is much akin
To *soap and water* on the Ethiop's skin.

The Ten-Pounder, 22 September 1832.

14. [There were times, my Lord Jeffrey, between you and me]

This song features in an instalment of *Blackwood's Magazine's* long-running series, the 'Noctes Ambrosianae'. The magazine's fictional editor-figure Christopher North and his secretary Mullion are visited by Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850), who had introduced the Scottish Reform Bill in Parliament and was standing for election in Edinburgh alongside James Abercromby: 'Here's The Advocate come in full fig to canvass you for your second vote in Auld Reekie'. The Tory *Blackwood's* had a long and acrimonious history with Jeffrey, who had edited the rival, Whiggish *Edinburgh Review* until 1829. As a result, the fictive Jeffrey gets a prickly reception: North casts doubt on his and Abercromby's long-standing commitment to reform, then sings a song that questions the value of political upheaval as a means for effecting true, lasting social change (if such change is to be considered desirable in the first place). This proved to be a popular anti-reform poem that was detached from its specific Blackwoodian context and republished (with some slight amendments) in several conservative newspapers across Scotland, including the *Glasgow Herald* and *Aberdeen Observer*. The poem was also included, under the title 'A New Song', in Peter Brown's *Reform Songs and Squibs*, an anthology of largely anti-Whig poems from the early 1830s.

Honor Rieley

AIR "Come bother their buttons, quoth Tom o' the Goose."

There were times, my Lord Jeffrey, between you and me,
Rather blither than those we are likely to see;
When plain folk went to church, loved and honour'd their king,
And our hard-working farmers heard nothing of SWING.

No groans then were given for Tithes, Taxes, or Rent,
The rich man look'd kindness, the poor man content,
And though war raged without we were deaf to its din,
Midst the heart-cheering hum of our treddles within.

There was work on the shore, there was wealth on the sea,
Abroad there was glory, at home there was glee;
Men stuck to the counter, the shop, and the loom;
And laughed at the ravings of Cobbett and Hume.¹⁰

But our Solons in place have found out, it would seem,
All this wealth was a burden, this comfort a dream;
Our homes must be left for the hustings—God wot!
And Happiness turns on franchise or not.

Look after your Till was the rule till of late,
But now 'tis, look after the Till of the State;

¹⁰ William Cobbett (1763–1835) and Joseph Hume (1777–1855).

Even our schoolmaster's ta'en such a fancy to roam,
You will never by chance find him flogging AT HOME!

Time was when we drank to the health of our King,
But now we've discovered that isn't *the thing*—
That our rulers henceforth should have nothing to do—
And the mob should be monarch and ministry too!

Time was when the Mace or the Sword of the Law
Kept the good man in safety, the scoundrel in awe;
Now law must to brickbats and bludgeons give place,
And burning a town throws new light on the case.

Are we richer, or better, or happier now?
Sits life with its troubles more light on our brow?
Does plenty flow in with the "Minister's Plan?"—
Does Man look more kind or more loving on Man?

Is the hum of our engines more loud? Do we see
More ships in the harbour, more ploughs on the lea?
Will flags and processions pay weavers their hire,
Or a vote lay a log on the labourer's fire?

Oh! not—till the spirit of change shall be laid,
Till the limbs reacknowledge the rule of the head;
Till each honest Reformer shall stoop to the art
Of reforming his own rotten borough—THE HEART;—

Till banish'd Religion and Faith shall return,
And bright in our bosoms old Loyalty burn,
Till Labour and Confidence walk side by side,
And Reverence sit in the place of Whig Pride;—

Will the clouds of distress that o'ershadow our sky,
Like mists of the morning, break up and blow by;
Our tumults, our terrors, our sufferings cease,
And Plenty come smiling, sweet daughter of Peace!

Blackwood's Magazine, October 1832.

15. The Whigs' Supplication to Apollo.

Satire was a popular rhetorical weapon for political poets in the early 1830s, and this poem from the conservative *Aberdeen Observer* highlights the fact that newspapers were competing to publish the strongest satirical verse. The poem appears in the first of a series of 'Dramatic Scenes' in the *Aberdeen Observer*; this instalment is titled 'Joint-stock Editor in his Study'. In the preamble to this poem, the devil enters the editor's study and composes 'The Whigs' Supplication to Apollo'. The poem, written in Habbie stanza, or Burns stanza, parodies the voice of a reformer, reflecting on the hopelessness of the reformers' poetry. The speaker states that while reformers cannot write effective poetry, the Tories 'never fail / To write baith prose and verse sae well'. The speaker then implores: 'O, gie us Satire's scorpion lash' so that they can attack the anti-reformers as well as the anti-reformers attack them. The *Aberdeen Observer's* pro-reform rival, the *Aberdeen Herald*, is invoked in this poem, with the implication being that its poetry is pitiful. The fact that the devil has written this poem, and may be its speaker, reflects a broad trend in anti-reform poetry in this period of associating the devil with the reformers.

Michael Shaw

DEVIL.— (*Solus and seating himself.*) Here I am in the Editor's chair. I wonder if there's ony inspiration in't. Here's pen and ink and paper, and what for shouldna I try to compose an "article?" Should it be prose or poetry? Poetry sticks best to folk's memory, and so here goes

O, bright Apollo—Jove's great son!
What hae the poor Reformers done,
That nane o' them has e'er begun
 (That we've heard tell o')
In verse or prose to soun' their drone
 But's made a feel o'.

Why should the Tories never fail
To write baith prose and verse sae well,
Whan we, wha ought to bear the bell
 Aboon sic wretches,
Shou'd aye be tumbled down the hill
 (*Hiatus in M.S.*)

Shall we frae week to week address
The public frae the Herald Press
An' prove the Tories a disgrace
 To men o' honour,
An' yet be made, by that curst race,
 A world's won'er.

If we poetic license tak'
An' strive a wee bit lie to mak',
Down comes a Tory wi' a whack

Out o'er our hurdies,
An' gars us instantly retract,
An' eat our wordies.

Shou'd Eb Eb Eg write in our favour,
Some Tory proves his work a *haver*,
Shou'd master "T." his *threats* deliver
Frae Banner Mill,
The *retribution tells* for ever
Upon himsel'.

Nae sooner *John* bestrides Pegasus,
An' writes to please the workin' classes,
But some confounded Tory asses
Are in his witters,
An' tears his Pamphlet a' to pieces—
"To rags an' tatters."

Look down bright Sol! wi' pitying e'e,
The sons o' freedom's sufferings see;
An' if to serve the *Good Cause*, we
Must truth abandon,
Gi'es *harns* at least to mak' a lie
Wi' feet to stand on.

Gi'e Eb Eb Eg mair information,
Gi'e Brither "T." a wee discretion,
Pit *Writer Johnny* in a passion,
That he may storm
An' shack' his mane wi' indignation,
An' roar Reform!

O, gi'e us Satire's scorpion lash
Our *scoundrel* Tory foes to thrash,
Wi' strength an' wit their powers to crush;
O, glorious fun!
To gar them suffer in the flesh
As we ha'e done.

Gi'es true poetic inspiration;
O! brighten our imagination,
Till, by the clear illumination,
We gar the Herald
Be read wi' rapturous admiration
Thro' a' the world.

An' whan we've made, by thy great power,

Our calling and election sure,
There's fourteen hun'er Whigs an' more,
 Wi' open jaws,
Shall Glory to thy Godship roar!
 In loud huzzas.

And so the poem's finished, and the lum's burnt out, and I'll be off to breakfast. (*Exit Devil singing,*

"Satan sittin' in the neuk,
 Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Rivin' sticks to roast the Duke, &c. &c.)¹¹

Aberdeen Observer, 5 October 1832.

¹¹ Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852).

16. To the Banffshire Voters. A New Song.

Following the passage of the Reform Bill, a general election was called for December 1832. The issue of reform still dominated this election, with many reformers arguing that the Tories had betrayed the people, and the Tories attempting to rally the anti-reformers. This poem is from the Aberdeenshire campaign, which William Gordon, the Tory candidate, ultimately won. The speaker of this poem, published in the Liberal *Aberdeen Herald*, sarcastically lists the Tory's supposed strengths, highlighting the fact that he does not have the people's interests at heart. The poem mocks Gordon's supposed 'reformist' credentials and the idea that he fought for a 'fair Reform'. It cautions voters and reminds them that the Tories can only 'thwart reform'.

Michael Shaw

Tune, "*Whistle o'er the lave o't.*"

Ye Banffshire Voters, ane an' a',
Feuars and farmers—great an' sma',
Arouse! unite! your spirit shaw!
And vote for—Colonel Gordon.

Your matters a' he well does ken;
His interests, too, are just your ain;
And he'll you serve wi' might an' main—
The gallant—Colonel Gordon.

He is convener of your shire;
To name his claims it wad you tire;
To right your wrangs nane can aspire
Sae fit as—Colonel Gordon.

Look at the past, and *there* you'll find
Strong proofs of his clear, vigorous mind;
The good o' Banff his heart entwined—
Convener—Colonel Gordon.

That ye your privilege have got,
Spite o' Pitfour—and right to vote
Is partly owing—is it not?
To active—Colonel Gordon.

For *fair Reform* you fought wi' might,
Ye've got it now;—'tis worth your fight;
Its movements a' will sure gang right,
Watch'd o'er by—Colonel Gordon.

For shame! To think a Tory can

Have aught in view, but *mar* your plan,
And *thwart* Reform;—na, na, *your man*
Is clearly—Colonel Gordon.

Let silly sumphs to poll be led,
Like sheep in raips for slaughter fed;
Sic *laughing-stocks* ye'll nae be made,
Wha vote for—Colonel Gordon.

Consistency and self-respect,
And zeal your interests to protect;
All motives urge you to elect
Reformer—Colonel Gordon.

October. COMMON SENSE.

P.S.—A Banff bit Justice, dull an' dour,
'Bout grammar *carps*—spits *spite* like *stour*;
Pops aff his *pluff o' pithless power*,
Ye see, at—Colonel Gordon.

Aberdeen Herald, 27 October 1832.

17. A New Whig Garland.

Poetry in the 1830s was commonly printed on broadsides – single sheets of paper that were often sold very cheaply. Due to their ephemeral nature, they are hard to trace and have not been preserved as well as periodicals or poetry volumes. But, thankfully, numerous broadsides connected to the 1832 General Election in Edinburgh remain and are housed in the National Library of Scotland. Although this broadside song does not directly reference reform, it is indirectly connected to the agitation as most reform agitators continued to back the Whigs or the Radicals in elections after the Reform Bill was passed, and remained suspicious of the Tories. In this poem, the speaker encourages the reader to vote for both of the Whig candidates for the two Edinburgh seats: James Abercromby and Francis Jeffrey, who were both prominent reformers in Edinburgh. Jeffrey in particular is praised for helping defend Edinburgh residents from 'Londoners'. The speaker also instructs readers to 'beware of lies' and to strike down 'every Tory'. No publication details are printed on this broadside, but there is a handwritten note at the bottom of the National Library of Scotland copy, '13 July 1832', which may indicate a publication date.

Michael Shaw

TUNE—*A begging we will go.*

I am a freeman, tight and sound,
Of Edinbro's good town,
For trade and lads of honest heart,
A place of high renown.

And a voting we will go, will go,
And a voting we will go.

Two Members for the Parliament
We suddenly must choose;
Good men and true take care they be,
Who won't their trust abuse.

Our votes the old ones ask again,
In Parliament *well try'd*,
But the ablest merchants of the town
Won't vote upon their side.

Their *independent tradesmen* too
Are hearty in *their* cause;
Glad to support the men who *guard*
Their *liberties and laws*.

They've served us well in times of peace.
And served us well in war;
They love a Sailor in their hearts,
Nor hate the smell of tar.

But there's Jamie Abercrombie, lads,
A town's-bred bird, I swear,
Who to your cause and interests true,
No pain did ever spare.

And next there's Francis Jeffrey,
Was bred a Lawyer here,
And fights for you 'gainst Londoners
Without dismay or fear.

They know what cargoes are, and how
Our barks may find employ,
And when we thrive the most in trade,
They feel the highest joy.

If these our Members be, my lads,
Our cannons loud shall roar,
And open trade be carried on
O'er all the Indian shore.

Then honest lads, beware of lies,
Believe no idle story,
But strike at once for freedom' cause
And down with every Tory.
And a voting, &c.

C. M'K.

18. The Devil's Walk.

The Devil is a prominent figure in several reform and anti-reform poems of the 1830s. Unlike 'The Whigs' Supplication to Apollo', this poem presents Satan as an ally of the Tories. 'The Devil's Walk' appears in *The Aetherial Record*, which was a satirical Ayrshire magazine edited by 'Prospero', an elusive figure who has been identified as the radical surgeon and Chartist Dr John Taylor, although this attribution has not been corroborated. Taylor stood for the Ayrshire Burghs seat in 1832 and famously challenged his opponent Thomas Kennedy to a duel. This poem invokes Taylor: the speaker compares the appearance of a well-dressed Satan to 'doctor John', a mark of just how tongue-in-cheek this poem is. We are told that Satan's closest friends are the Tories, as well as 'the general election' as a whole. In the poem, Satan journeys to 'Cloud' (Ayr) where he expresses his concern that the Tories are being converted by an 'angry band / Of sage Reformer's [sic]'. Nick then goes around various local figures, including William Blair, a former MP, and gives them good wishes and says that they should not 'fear Reformers now'. Satan then says they must all vote for him and 'the rotten side' – the rotten burghs which were a primary target of reformers. The Paisley-born poet John Mitchell takes up this association of the Devil with the anti-reform cause in his poem *Nick's Tour* (1846), in which the Devil comes to Scotland and sides with the anti-Chartists.

Michael Shaw

The Devil lost his appetite,
He knew not what to do,
His good warm home seemed desolate—
Each little imp looked blue.
But Hope, kind goddess, seeing him,
Took pity on his plight,
And deigned to shed amid the shades,
A passing ray of light.
Old Nick he whisked his drooping tail—
The fire he stirred anew,
"And Gad!" cried he, "I'll up to earth
And my good subjects view."
He donned his coat of blackest dye,
His shovel hat put on,
And bushy whiskers brushing up,
Looked just like doctor John.
Commanding then a little imp
To fetch his walking stick—
He looked among the maps of earth,
A pleasant road to pick.
Oh Cloud, said he, 's the town for me—
For there without a boast,
I ever have, and think I shall
For ever rule the roast.
And now I see my Tory friends,

The staunchest and the best,
 Are yielding, by an angry band
 Of sage Reformer's pressed.
 He hied him up the steep ascent,
 And coming to the light—
 Beheld (in truth it made him stare)
 A wondrous pretty sight,
 His beard he stroked, and winking, said,
 I've made a wise selection;
 I'm just in time to see my friend,
 The general election.
 He bowed to all the motley group—
 An arm took of the Major;
 And said, Dear N—I, point out the folks,
 For here you're an old stager.
 But scarcely I your aid require,
 So many friends I see;
 Oh, Clapper, fond as ever lad
 Of making poetry?
 You know the song you wrote upon
 The kitten in the well;
 Ending so pathetic'ly,
 In ding, dong, bell.
 And does the muse as fondly smile
 As in your younger days;
 Or has she fickle ceased to deck
 Your temples with the bays?
 I saw your substitute go by—
 A worthy friend of mine;
 Ordained by nature certainly,
 On Judge's bench to shine.
 Before him should you seek redress,
 Just take a friend's advice—
 Present him something that is quite
 Scarce, eatable and nice.
 But if the man opposing you,
 His failing too should twig,
 And when you send a plumb pudding,
 Present a sucking pig,
 He'll beat you to a certainty,
 Though just are your pretensions;
 His justice keeps companionship
 With the eatable's dimensions.
 He's looking pale and hungry too;
 'Tis ane of his auld freaks,
 Expecting a tuck in to-day—
 He's eaten nought for weeks.

But good bye, Clapper, I should be
 In truth a very brute,
 Did I neglect my female friends,
 Whom I must now salute.
 He patted Mrs Lofty's back,
 And thus addressed the dame:—
 Continue life as you began,
 And spoil your neighbour's fame;
 If any Miss too pretty is,
 Surmise that you have seen
 Her frolic with a handsome lad,
 Where she should not have been.
 He kissed the buxom Mrs B—,
 The widow lady spunky;
 Advising the fat devotee
 To keep a handsome flunky.
 Dame nature still will have her way,
 Despising all controul;
 *'Tis but the flesh that goes astray,
 The body, not the soul.
 He gave Sir Hurter Bear a smile,
 And grinned at Gibby too;
 But he shook Old Billy by the hand,
 His staunchest friend and true;
 Go on nor fear Reformers now,
 Their shock you must abide—
 And vote as you have ever done,
 For me and the rotten side.
 And you shall have a birth below,
 As hot as Hell can make it;
 Be thirsty as you've ever been,
 With damn the drop to slake it.
 I'm glad to hear our friends are true—
 I see they muster strong;
 But I fear Reform in Hell just now,
 So I'll call for them ere long.
 The Devil thus proceeded on,
 Discanting as he went—
 Almost as garrulous, in fact,
 As parsons are in Lent.
 But suddenly, with hair erect
 And drooping tail, he hied
 As quickly off as he could run,
 I know not what he spied.
 I certainly could nought behold,
 But a little woman come,
 With (if 'twas all *her* property)

A most enormous bum.
Old Bully Bluster says he raised
His stick to make him fly;
This, I and other people think,
Upon my soul—a lie.
Good people all, of every sort,
Unless you think there's harm in
My first, when next Old Nick comes back,
You'll have a second Carmen.

*We presume this is a doctrine of the Devil's.

The Aetherial Record, 1832.

19. Reformers' Election Song,—By William Johnston.

This poem appears on one of the few election broadsides that have been preserved in Glasgow. It appears to have been part of a larger broadside, but only this cutting remains. Although the broadside is not dated, the poem can be reasonably attributed to 1837 as it concerns the 1837 election. In 1837, James Oswald – a vocal campaigner for the 1832 Reform Acts – stood down and there was an election. The poem commends Oswald's work and advises voters to select an MP who can continue the reformers' cause. The preferred representative, according to the poem, is John Dennistoun, the Liberal candidate, over Robert Monteith the Tory. As in several other reform poems, the spirit of William Wallace is invoked here to align Scottish national identity and defence with the cause of reform.

Michael Shaw

Mr Oswald now we find, that his seat he has resign'd
Reformers their loss they may deplore;
Our cause he did maintain, but in Parliament again
Our Patriot he'll never sit more.

For Glasgow city he now has left a vacancy,
So reformers find one in his place;
That will your rights maintain, if you don't I'll you plain,
That your great Metropolis you will disgrace.

To the poll, to the poll, now reformers every soul,
All that hae got a vote in the town;
Mr Denniston's the man elect him now if you can,
But young Menteith the tory keep down.

Poll away, poll away, keep that tory out I say,
Who's plan is to keep you in thrall;
One of that name I say, the brave Wallace did betray,
Keep him out and your fame I'll extoll.

To your post, to your post, for the Tories they do boast,
Of their wealth and great strength in this town;
Now is the day now the hour you have it in your power,
To unite now and keep them all down.

Keep them down, keep them down, let them see in Glasgow town,
That your rights you will manfully maintain,
Give to no man a seat but a liberal candidate,
Then applause for yoursel's you will gain.

Mr Dennistoun will do all he's promised for you;
Now Reformers what do you want more?
In Parliament he will all his pledges there fulfil,

As your Champion brave Oswald did before.

To the poll, to the poll, Glasgow voters every soul
You have now no time to delay;
Turn out now to a man, muster all the votes you can,
Let them say that Denniston has won the day.

J. MUIR, Printer.