

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

Contents

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

1.	Dark Bonnymuir	5
2.	Our Brave Sailor King	7
3.	Milesian Melody.—No. XII.	9
4.	The New Chevy Chase.	11
5.	Che Sara, Sara	17
6.	Thirty-Two	19
7.	The Spirit of Toryism, As Displayed at the Late Literary Dinner to the Ettrick Shepherd	22
8.	Task for Anti-Reformers	24
9.	[Up John Bull and clear your brows]	25
10.	The Flogged Soldier	27
11.	Reform Song	29
12.	A Canvassing Episode	31
13.	Fables from Ancient Authors, or Old Saws with Modern Instances	32
14.	[There were times, my Lord Jeffrey, between you and me]	35
15.	The Whigs' Supplication to Apollo	37
16.	To the Banffshire Voters	40
17.	A New Whig Garland	42
18.	The Devil's Walk	44
19.	Reformers' Election Song	48

Part Two: Poems relating to the Representation of the People Acts, 1867-8

20.	The Glesca' Carter	51
21.	Reform	53
22.	On the Death of an Old Reformer	55
23.	The Reform Bill	57
24.	The Franchise O' Women – A Song	58
25.	Reform!	59
26.	A Non-Elector's Soliloquy	60
27.	A Veteran Tory's Lament	61
28.	The Battle of the Kilmarnock Burghs	64

Part Three: Poems relating to the Representation of the People Act, 1884

29.	Grannie Black	68
30.	The Deil and the Peers; or, The Battle o' the Franchise	70
31.	[Hail, Liberals one and all]	72
32.	Invitation to the Bathgate Demonstration, October 4, 1884	74
33.	Reform: A Woman's Work	76
34.	On the Franchise Demonstration of the 6 th Inst. Reply to Marion Bernstein on the Franchise Demonstration of the 6 th Ult. Answer to M.A. Smith	78
35.	Election Song	83
36.	The Song of the Millionaire	85

Part Four: Poems relating to the Representation of the People Act, 1918

37.	Regrets	88
38.	Carson's Farewell to Aberdeen	90
39.	[Green grow the rashes O]	92
40.	The Suffragette's Nut Cracked	93
41.	The Great Demonstration	95
42.	Shakespeare Up to Date	97
43.	[Newington Butts were lively]	99
44.	Full Tide	100
45.	Women Shall be Free	101
46.	The Monstrous Regiment of Women	103
47.	Should Women Get the Vote?	104

**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 Honesty 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 Condy Raguett, *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 lispings 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.

**Part Two: Poems relating to the Representation
of the People Acts, 1867-8**

20. The Glesca' Carter.

This song is by James Houston (born 1828), a well-known music-hall performer. An engineer by profession, during the 1860s he was working in engineering firms by day and performing at night. There is a lively and entertaining account of his life and music-hall adventures in *Autobiography of Mr James Houston, Scotch Comedian* (Glasgow: John Menzies, 1889). 'The Glesca' Carter', published with other poems and songs at the end of the *Autobiography*, definitely relates to the second Reform Bill of 1867, and probably specifically to the October 1866 Reform demonstration at which John Bright, radical politician and hero of reformers, addressed a large Glasgow meeting. This song also falls into a popular 1860s music-hall genre of 'sensation songs'. These tended to reference the perceived sensationalism of the 1860s and feature a hapless character who narrates their involvement in dramatic and entertaining events. The performer would break into 'sensational' dance styles ('jumping' songs were also popular) on the chorus: presumably Houston did a comic imitation of driving a cart in this one. No tune is given, but the verses are in a standard pattern and would have been sung to a known tune.

Carters, as a profession, were stereotypically known for supporting reform, so it is not surprising that Jock stands up for his rights against the aristocracy and gives a political speech at Glasgow Green. But, even in these comic verses, it shows us how Glasgow working-class men were represented as strongly pro-reform. It also shows us that there was no separation between the comic and the political on the music-hall stage. Houston and his audience of predominately working-class men and women would have supported reform also, but they could also gently mock the stereotype of the zealous reformer. The song segued into a lengthy section of comic Scots prose, not reproduced here.

Kirstie Blair

The folk are a' gaun roarin' mad
Tae hear some new sensation,
Sae I maun try what I can add
Tae meet your expectation.
I'm a rattlin' carter chap,
At drivin' I'm a smerter;
In fact, I'll tell ye in a word,
I'm Jock the Glesca' carter.

Gee whoo, hip, an' gee back,
Hip an' gee back, whoa vain, sir;
I'm a Glesca' carter chap,
Jack Thomson is my name, sir.

I was drivin' across the brig the day,
My horse had just got on it,
When a swell began tae tak' his nap
Aff my Kilmarnock bonnet;
I drew my whip across his legs,
By jing he did but start, sir;
Says I, the bonnet an' whip, ye see,

Belangs tae Jock the carter.

In Glesca' Green the ither day,
At the great demonstration,
Mr. Bright was fairly in the shade
When I gied my oration;
For spoutin' about politics,
I ha'e got the art, sir;
So listen an' ye'll hear a speech,
Frae Jock the Glesca' carter.

Autobiography of Mr. James Houston, Scotch Comedian (Glasgow: Menzies and Love, 1889),
p. 193.

21. Reform.

This poem first appeared in the *Airdrie Advertiser* on 24 November 1866, next to an editorial on 'The New Reform Bill', so it forms part of the Scottish Liberal press's support for reform in 1866-67. Like most pro-reform poems of this period, it praises radical pro-reform MP, John Bright. It also moves from the specific issue of reform to a broader denunciation of the privileges of rank, wealth and station. 'D. T., Hillend' was a familiar figure in the newspaper poetry columns. Thomson was a working man who, by the late 1860s, was keeper of the reservoir at Hillend. In *Modern Scottish Poets* vol. 2 (Brechin: D.H. Edwards, 1881, p.112), editor D. H. Edwards cites him as an overtly political and implicitly radical poet. 'He took great interest in the political and social movements of his time, and gave expression to his sentiments with a vigour and directness which left no room for misunderstanding as to the leaning of his sympathies.'

Kirstie Blair

I hear that monster freedom's foe,
Base Toryism, crying,
That it has got a fearfu' blow,
An' thinks itsel' a-dying.

For Johnny Bricht, wi' patriot micht,
Has roond it fetters locked,
An' wi' fair justice, manhood's richt,
He has it maistly choked.

But yet its Heralds soond its praise,
An' every scheme are trying,
Tae lengthen oot the tyrant's days,
A' puir men's richts denyng.

Sic touting doctors canna save
A thing sae foul an' tainted,
For soon 'twill fill a traitor's grave,
An' winna be lamented.

Then merit will not meet wi' scorn,
Or worth be unrewarded;
Men will be noble, tho' low-born,
An' rank be disregarded.

For sense maun tak' the place o' pride,
An' walth a lower station,
When honesty flings fraud aside,
An' virtue guides oor nation.

The rich will not the puir then slicht,
Just for the very reason,

That richt will stan' its ain 'gainst micht,
An' nane daur ca' it treason.

David Thomson, *Musings Among the Heather* (Edinburgh: Thomson Brothers, 1881), p.238.

22. On the Death of an Old Reformer.

David Carnegie was a factory worker and political and social poet from Arbroath, who published primarily in the local and Dundee press. The person lamented here has not been identified, but the poem serves as an important elegy for an older reformer, active in 1830s radicalism and Chartism, by a younger and more moderate reformer of the 1860s. The glorious day that William lived to see is likely that of the Second Reform Act in 1867, so the poem again reflects upon the relationship between the 1830s and the 1860s.

Kirstie Blair

TO-DAY, old friend! thy lifeless form
Was laid into its last, lone bed,
And, standing by thy open grave,
I thought upon a promise made—
A promise made long years ago—
That if I lived, and had the skill,
My humble muse should sing thy dirge.
I'll try that promise to fulfil:

Farewell, old William, fare-thee-well!
Thy ringing voice no more we'll hear,
Proclaiming all the bitter wrongs
Which tyrant wealth makes labour bear.
Thou wert a hater, fierce and keen,
Of all who durst oppress the poor,
Though seated on a purple throne
Or strutting o'er a factory floor.

Justice and Right thou boldly claimed
As parts of Heaven's eternal laws,
And deemed him foe to God and man
Who tried to stifle Freedom's cause.
The People's Charter thou espoused
With all a patriot's fiery zeal,
And long thou toil'd to win that power
Which all our wrongs would surely heal.

Thou hast not lived to see it won,
But thou hast lived and seen that day
When ancient barriers were hewn down,
And old traditions thrown away.
We sometimes thought thee too severe
When Whigs and Tories were thy theme,
But well we knew thou were sincere—
Thy principles no boyish dream.

And whilst thy tongue denounced the wrongs

Inflicted on the helpless poor,
No wretched wanderer pled in vain
Whom want brought to thy humble door.

David Carnegie, *Lays and Lyrics from the Factory* (Arbroath: Thomas Buncle, 1879), p. 59.

23. The Reform Bill

This poem is embedded in an advertisement in a part of the newspaper normally confined to commercial interests. William Anderson, as the advertisement suggests, was a wholesale and retail tea and coffee merchant, with two premises. According to the Post Office Directory for this time, he himself lived at 4 Adelphi Place. The poem is chiefly of interest as an exemplar of how deeply the reform agitation had penetrated popular culture and how one trader sought to take advantage of this. The poem itself is non-committal: why, after all, would Anderson wish to alienate support from either Liberal or Tory? However, with GLADSTONE in capital letters, Anderson is clearly aware that the name would attract attention. (There are a good number of 'Gladstone' poems in the database.)

Catriona M.M. Macdonald

TEA! TEA!! TEA!!!

Throughout the land's fair length and breadth
Hath been of late a storm
Of politicians great and small,
In clamours for reform;

But when, upon the twelfth of March,
An anxious day for many,
The Bill, so long looked forward to,
Had scarce a charm for any.

And while this great imperfect scheme
GLADSTONE'S attention fills,
ANDERSON would whisper in your ear,
Reform your household bills.

His is the Best TEA you can buy,
And Cheapest too as well;
And these are genuine reforms,
As you who buy will tell.

—
A GREAT portion of the First and Finest Arrivals of each New Season's Teas is consigned to W. ANDERSON; and in consequence of the enormous Sales which he can effect, he is enabled to dispose of them at Prices which defy competition. The following, among others, are to be had at the Pagoda Establishments, 116 TRONGATE, and 105 DALMARNOCK ROAD, GLASGOW:—

Green Gunpowder tea, finest,	3s 8d per lb.
Good Strong Black Tea,	1s 6d "
Very Fine Souchong Tea, Rich and Well Flavoured	1s 8d "

Paisley Herald, 12 May 1866.

24. The Franchise O' Women – A Song

'The Franchise O' Women' was published in the *Dundee Advertiser*, a daily newspaper whose editorial position was pro-reform and which generally attracted a left-wing or radical-leaning audience. As this poem demonstrates, this alignment did not always translate to all areas of their politics. The anonymous poet counters John Stuart Mill's support of women's rights with an argument based on the existence of a 'natural' family structure, a structure which may have seemed to the author to be increasingly under threat as the number of married women in full-time employment increased in Dundee. Few poems in genuine support of women's suffrage made it into the nineteenth-century Dundee newspapers, though the issue was evidently discussed outside of the press. For example, female workers carried a banner demanding women's suffrage at the 1867 reform demonstration.

Erin Farley

The order o' Nature has made itsel' plain
That wives should be subject, not slaves, to their men.
That family franchise, wi' union o' will,
Is safe frae the logic o' Johnnie Stewart Mill.

This fact, o' itsel', should his logic destroy –
Men fecht for the richts that their women enjoy;
Gin law be but usage, and usage be law,
The franchise o' women is nane o' the twa.

Whaur marriage is sacred atween man an' wife,
Nae Court o' Divorce needs t' part them for strife;
A vote frae a wife is a vote frae her man –
Their hearts are united – their tongues are at one.

Instead o' the union o' titles and lands,
Let hearts be united on joinin' o hands:
The first's the disease, an' the second's the cure –
The hame will be happy, the State mair secure.

Reform i' our hames, an' our persons sedate,
Will hush a' the clamours o' Church an' o' State;
When women are mithers, an' fathers are men,
The practice o life will its theories restrain.

The outcome o' virtue is made t' depend
On the means use'd at hame to lead to its end;
Let hame be held sacred as Nature's ain school,
An' a sophist like Mill be set down as a fool.

X.

Dundee Advertiser, 5 January 1867.

25. Reform!

This verse was performed by Frank Hill of the Theatre Royal, Aberdeen, at the local branch meeting of the National Reform League. Described as 'a stump speech after the manner of music hall orators,' Hill appeared on stage 'in the character of Minerva' on the evening of Saturday 26 October 1867. A report on the evening appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser* the following Tuesday, which noted that the crowd was not large, but was composed mainly of young people, including several women. The Mr Shearer addressed in the verse was the Aberdeen Branch president. This verse was not written to directly advance the cause of reform itself. Rather, it was part of the social culture of the reform movement, and was intended for an audience of campaigners. As such, it is less of a polemic and more of a light-hearted satire on the political scene in Britain and in Aberdeen itself, mixing references to local developments concerning the harbour with references to national news, like Thomas Carlyle's anti-household suffrage essay 'Shooting Niagara,' published earlier that year.

Erin Farley

Reform! Soul-stirring sound. Old things are become new, and new things are become remarkable – *very!* Is not the war cry of Garibaldi echoing over the fair land of Italy? Doth not the Tories of Edinburgh eat leeks with Disraeli in the banqueting halls of Auld Reekie? Hath not the sage of Greenwich – Thomas Carlyle – been *shooting Niagara*; and why shouldn't I – I shoot Niagara – or any other man? Tell me that! I pause for a reply.

Reform! Yes –

Reform abroad, Reform at home –

On Highland hill, and ocean's foam;

Send Abyssinia's captives free,

Let Fenian knaves the knaves' fate dree;

dree - endure

Down with each ill stands men between,

Up with the shout – Long live the Queen!

Reform! Reform! Reform! Reform!

The old Fish Market, now at length removed,

The Harbour entrance, too, must straightway be improved;

Right from this sheet to Torry's Mountain ridge,

You soon shall tread a safe inviting bridge –

Thence shall we cross all – all untolled and free,

And watch the little fishes sporting in the Dee!

Reform!

My friends, there's nothing can be surer, clearer,

Reform's embodied here in Mr Shearer.

Dundee Advertiser, 29 October 1867.

26. A Non-Elector's Soliloquy.

This poem, exploiting Hamlet's famous soliloquy, was published in *The Eclipse* – one of three journals that shaped the 1868 general election in Paisley. While the other two were very much aligned to particular party interests (*The Hoo'let* (Tory) and *The Hawk* (Liberal)), *The Eclipse* sought to lampoon all vested interests in the contest, and frequently used the character of the jester to emphasise its playful and satirical intent. Here the dilemma of those deciding whether to vote, rather than for whom to vote, is the focus and relates to the relationship between the compilation of the voting register, the payment of local rates and the qualifications for the franchise. This relationship had attracted a great deal of interest and debate during the deliberations in parliament. For further insight, see Robert Saunders, 'The Politics of Reform and the Making of the Second Reform Act, 1848-1867' in *The Historical Journal*, 50, 3 (2007), pp. 571-591. In simple terms, it meant that many had to weigh up what the vote meant to them financially, as it came at a cost: one had to have been assessed and paid local taxes.

Catriona M.M. Macdonald

To vote or not to vote! that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in a non, to suffer
The sneers and laughter of the upper ten,
Or to take arms against the aristocracy,
And by his clamour fright them? To vote, to vote—
That's all: and, by our votes, to say we end
Our anger, and the thousand natural thoughts
That nons are heirs to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To vote—eh, what?—
To vote! but first to pay: aye, there's the rub;
For when we pay our rates, what more may come,
When that collector haunts up our arrears,
Must give us pause; there's the dire thought,
That makes us still dislike to vote.
For who would bear our state for any time,
A Treasurer's gab, a Councillor's contempt,
The silence of our member, and the spurns
That brains and labour of some big wean take,
When he himself might eas'ly get a vote
By a mere payment. Who would such torment bear,
To live a weary non-electors life,
But that the dread of that collector's book,
The great and fearful volume, on whose leaves
Our money's never marked, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than pay up rates, whose sum we know not of?

The Eclipse, 14 November 1868, p. 7.

27. A Veteran Tory's Lament.

John Ramsay, born in Kilmarnock in 1802, was a carpet-weaver and eventually spirit-dealer: he states in the preface to *Gleanings of the Gloamin'* that he first began publishing in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, and that he had notable success with an earlier volume (*Woodnotes of a Wanderer*). His life is briefly discussed in D. H. Edwards, *Modern Scottish Poets*, vol 3 (Brechin: D.H. Edwards, 1881, pp.270-1). The elections of 1868 were the first held after the Second Reform Act. The poem most likely references Ballochmyle because Claud Alexander of Ballochmyle was the losing Tory candidate in the 1868 election in South Ayrshire. The new constituency of North Ayrshire had also narrowly elected a Liberal candidate, hence 'We're vanquished north, we're vanquished south'. Ballochmyle was, moreover, likely to be known to readers from Burns's song 'The Lass O' Ballochmyle'. Ramsay's verses fit the song tune to some degree, though the subject-matter is very different. This poem is a devil's or 'deil's' lament, not an uncommon genre for satirical verse in the period. 'The Deil's Reply to Robert Burns', attributed by some to Burns himself, was one example circulating in various forms in the mid-Victorian period. Ramsay's Tory Satan nostalgically references a number of highly controversial political and religious events from the 1830s onwards, including the Rathcormac Massacre in Cork in 1843, when soldiers enforcing the collection of Church of Ireland tithes killed a number of protesting Catholic locals, and the Corn Laws. The reference to flogging is specifically to Alexander Somerville, a soldier whose brutal flogging in 1832 was widely attributed to his support for pro-Reform protestors (this case is referenced in 'The Flogged Soldier' appearing earlier in this collection). 'A Veteran Tory's Lament' thus suggests the direct continuity of Tory outrages from the 1830s to the 1860s, and implies that 1867 may have marked a major turning point. Since the reference to Claverhouse is probably to John Graham of Claverhouse, active in the seventeenth century and with a reputation for repression against Covenanters, the poem also connects recent history to a longer Scottish history of aristocratic rule.

Kirstie Blair

On the result of the election of 1868.

'Twas somewhere near to Ballochmyle,
The deil was met gaun down a brae,
And aye he sadly sung the while,
Alake! alake! we've lost the day.

We're vanquished north, we're vanquished south,
For a' that I could do or say,
By that auld hatefu' limmer Truth,
Alake! alake! we've lost the day.

I've laughed the working folk to see,
Their faces grim wi' want and wae.
While my freens lived in luxury,
But now, alake! we've lost the day.

I've laughed to see his lordship's game

Eat up the crap, the farmer sent
Adrift for killing ane o' them,
And roupit out to pay the rent.

I've laughed to see a man strung up
For writing o' anither's name,
Or maybe stealing o' a tup,
Or bread to fill a hungry wame.

I've laughed to see puir Papist Pat
Beneath the Kirk o' England grane,
It ser'd my cause far better that,
Than either Hume, Voltaire, or Paine.

To see from shrieking misery torn
The tithe, at point of bayonet,
Rathcormack made me cock my horn,
That scene, oh! how can I forget?

And I have sat unseen in court,
And chuckled with infernal glee,
To see their *dernier ressort*,
The voters coined by perjury.*

A flunkie swear himsel' a laird,
That hadna got a single stane,
Nor yet o' mither yirth a yard,
Or coat that he could ca' his ain.

Meantime the titled instigator, †
To that most sapient sucking pigeon,
The public, played the demonstrator
On ethics, politics, religion.

But what me tickled best ava
Was that most glorious tax on bread;
It made the puir man's cake sae sma'
And tripped up the heels of trade.

And O! how rich it was to stand
Red, reeking heaps o' carnage o'er,
And see the conqueror's ruthless band
Ride fetlock-deep in human gore!

And then to see the soldier brave,
For a' his battles, marches, drills,
Tied up like some puir recreant slave,

And flogged till blood ran o'er his heels.

Those were the days, the glorious days,
When statesman, courtier, king, and priest,
Could ride the nation their own ways,
Like some great stupid, patient beast.

Confound the Liberals, ane and a',
Were they but pinioned neck and heel,
And into my ain torture ha',
My certy! I would mak' them squeal.

Would Claverhouse again come back,
I'd hunt them a' o'er bank and brae;
But that is now a feckless crack,
Alake! alake! we've lost the day.

What mair he said, or where he gaed,
My douce informant didna say,
But up the glen lang came the mane,
Alake! alake! we've lost the day.

* During the election of 1841 we were sojourning in a county town on the Border, where this was carried on to a most scandalous extent. It was quite patent to the public, and must have had a deteriorating influence. The majority of the parties who had thus perjured themselves went home intoxicated. If these men afterwards acted dishonestly by their employers, it was only a natural, and I should almost say a necessary consequence.

† A Scotch Conservative nobleman, who was once delivering a lecture in a Mechanics' Institute in the West, strongly recommended religion to the people; he was at that period one of the leading magnates of the Turf, and but a short time previous had spent the Sabbath in curling on a pond in front of his own castle.

John Ramsay (1802–1879), *Gleanings of the Gloamin'* (London: J. and W. Rider, 1870), pp. 50-53.

28. The Battle of the Kilmarnock Burghs.

The general election which followed the passage of the Second Reform Act provided a great deal of fodder for poetry in the Kilmarnock Burghs constituency. The incumbent Liberal MP, Edward Pleydell-Bouverie (1818–1889), a son of the Earl of Radnor, had represented the burghs for almost twenty-five years, but in 1868 a subset of the local electors were sufficiently dissatisfied with his moderate stance on reform and his poor relationship with the Liberal leader William Ewart Gladstone to invite an 'Advanced Liberal' to challenge him. This outsider was Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890), a social reformer who had the backing of John Stuart Mill, which served to give the contest a national profile. Bouverie wrote to Mill reproaching him for his divisiveness, to which Mill responded: 'it is very much to be desired that every constituency should consider, not merely whether a man will do to represent it, but whether he is the best man to be had'. Bouverie took exception to this and published the correspondence in the *Times*; it was then reprinted in the Ayrshire papers (see *Ayr Advertiser* on 22 October 1868). However, Chadwick was not the only one to throw his hat into the ring: he was joined by Alexander Macdonald (1821–1881), the president of the Miners' National Association and a future Lib-Lab MP, and Robert Thomson, an independent with an idiosyncratic platform that centred around land distribution. No Tory stood for election.

This atypical set of candidates was a fertile source of inspiration for contributors to the *Kilmarnock Standard*, who all maintained the newspaper's establishment Liberal stance by portraying Bouverie's rivals as inherently comic figures: Chadwick as an elderly boffin, Macdonald as a troglodytic opportunist and Thomson as a harebrained eccentric. 'The Battle of the Kilmarnock Burghs' was published a few days before the election but accurately predicts the outcome: the candidates, imagined here as knights at a joust, are vanquished in the same order in which they finished in the polls, and each meets his demise in a manner that lines up with the character traits that have been satirised in the paper's poetry column for weeks leading up to the election. The poem is typical in its treatment of the contest as a burlesque with a foregone conclusion; the more left-leaning candidates will play out their parts but voters will ultimately come to their senses and remain faithful (marriage metaphors abound). The *Kilmarnock Standard* poets are concerned to recuperate the moderate Bouverie, representative of the status quo, as a fighter to whom the recently enfranchised should be grateful for their good fortune.

Honor Rieley

I sing of a battle, of battles the best
All over broad Scotland, at least in the West;
A battle stirred up by the new Reform Bill,
A battle fought out with both vigour and skill.

Old Russell may boast of Reform Number One,
For Progress advanced like a spring morning sun,
And struggled, while mists nearly hid her from view,
Till she burst forth unclouded with Bill Number Two.

Old poets have sung and old chroniclers tell
How our boroughs to Tories and Radicals fell,
But rent by division and faction complete,

'Twas hard to tell who was secure in his seat—

Till Bouverie, the son of a Liberal lord,
For Liberal principles unsheathed his sword;
Though calumny oft might make free with his name,
Yet still he preserved all untarnished his fame.

Thus Bouverie victorious the trophy has gained,
And for twenty-five years in his keeping remained,
Till three rival foemen now come to compete,
And have sworn to undo him—a difficult feat.

These three wrathful fighters, with hearts big with fate,
Now offer to tinker our kettle of State;
And champion Mac. stumps on to the field,
And, with a great pick axe, he thunders out "yield."

"By the shade of great Palmerston," Bouverie cries,
"Before I surrender these boroughs I prize,
I'll appeal to the voters, the old, and the new,
Who would still be unfranchised had I not proved true."

Then Chadwick, the Millite, no speech would pretend,
But statistics, he said, he could ply without end,
And certificates too; so with great greedy eyes,
Like a cat at a mouse, he would thus seize the prize.

Then Robin stalked forward, all burly and strong,
Encased in great speeches, at least three hours long;
He showed how all others would fade and grow dim—
All opponents would sink, and great Robin would swim.

To the boroughs of Killie these spouters repair,
These boroughs long tended with Bouverie's care,
And meetings were held, with professions so queer,
That simple ones thought the millenium was near.

A bard was selected, to witness the fun,
And tell the great deeds that the heroes had done;
Thus a terrible task has the bard of the day,
For Europe looks on at the laughable fray.

Now speeches as thick as grape shot in a battle,
Among the constituents furious rattle;
Each vowed he would gain the top rung of the ladder,
And made a noise loud as hard peas in a bladder.

Applause from the mob made the candidates splore,
No meetings ere heard such a "promising" core,
For each of the three told the glorious tale,
That when he got in he'd reform them wholesale.

Six speeches a piece wore the time well away,
When M'Ronald swore loud he would finish the fray,
He flourished his pick-axe, but Oh! sad to tell,
A coalpit was near, and down headlong he fell.

Then Robin, the gallant, fought hard to the end,
But who can with clearheaded voters contend?
And wearied with speaking, the bighearted soul,
Was killed like an ox by a stroke with the poll.

Then Chadwick rose up all so cautious and sage,
And said he'd continue the warfare to wage,
He would pile up Blue Books! *but the last ones took fire,*
Which proved this old gentleman's funeral pyre.

Then up rose the bard, with great wisdom inspired.
And gave in his verdict confoundedly tired;
"These boroughs can never be captured by force,
"And are not so insane as to sue for divorce."

These liberal boroughs are liberal still,
And Bouverie's the man who had worked with a will;
He has fought for us long—fought faithful and well,
So his be the boroughs, and mine be—farewell.

C.K.

Kilmarnock Standard, 14 November 1868.

**Part Three: Poems relating to the Representation
of the People Act, 1884**

Quo' auld grannie Black—quo' she.
His rivals may scheme, sneer, an' blether awa',
It doesna fash brave honest Willie ava,
He works unco sair for the gude o' us a',
Quo' auld grannie Black—quo' she.

I feel unco prood o' the "Highland Brigade,"
Quo' auld grannie Black—quo' she;
Oor brave kilty laddies are never afraid,
Quo' auld grannie Black—quo' she.
I read o' their deeds, an' it brings to my min',
Brave Wallace, King Bruce, an' the days o' langsyne,
The fame o' dear Scotia will never decline,
Quo' auld grannie Black—quo' she.

JOHN ALEXANDER.

124 King Street, Calton, Glasgow.

Glasgow Weekly Mail, 22 March 1884.

30. The Deil and the Peers; or, The Battle o' the Franchise.

John McLaren worked in the printing trade in Edinburgh, and was a relatively well-known local poet whose poems appeared in various Scottish newspapers: he started publishing in the papers at a young age, hence his 'Laddie Bard' pseudonym. His trade is referenced in the opening lines, which incorporate a pun on 'printers' devils', the young apprentices in the trade. This poem is an immediate response to the rejection of the Representation of the People Bill by the House of Lords on 8 July 1884, the Tuesday before the demonstration cited in the headnote to the poem. Like 'A Veteran Tory's Lament', this is another 'devil's lament' poem, and like the competition poems from the *West Lothian Courier*, it was not simply written about but distributed at pro-Reform demonstrations by McLaren's trade society. In this case, however, the devil is more ambiguous than in John Ramsay's poem. He seems to have been working with the Tory Lords, trying to convince them to save themselves by passing the Bill. As he vanishes 'with a grin', disgusted by their idiocy, the Lords are left to their fate, which, in these verses, is to be roundly defeated by Gladstone. The Conservative Lord Cairns and Lord Salisbury had both opposed the Bill on the grounds that they would not support reform without redistribution of seats (they eventually did gain this point). Interestingly, the devil seems to support women's franchise. A number of Liberal MPs had urged Gladstone to include women's franchise in the 1884 bill, but he had refused on the grounds that parliament would not pass such a measure.

Kirstie Blair

Printed by the Edinburgh Press and Machineman's Society, and distributed during the Franchise demonstration at Edinburgh on Saturday, 12th July, 1884.

Tune— "Hey, Johnny Cope."

In the Province o' Inkdom, the Deevil ae day
Cam' stappin' doon by chance whaur his "imps" lined the way,
As he yelled—"Print the news!— that I'm sick o' foul play,
And have left the Peers girin' this mornin'."

Chorus.

"Salisbury and his gang in a hostile fit
Ettled mischief, I trow, in an awfu' hit;
But 'The Grand Old Man' will ootwit them a' yet,
And gar them wheel about some fine mornin'!"

"Oh! my coal-black hair, aince sae gawcie an' braw,
Is turned, lack-a-day! as white as driven snaw,
Wi' tryin' to convince the Lords in their mad thraw—
They may wauken without coronets some mornin'!"

Then the Deevil sat doon at the door o' St Giles,
And scartin' his pow, that was fu' o' 'cute wiles,
He roared oot, "The idiots! after a' my toils—
They'll be flung in the Thames some cauld mornin'!"

We speired him gin he thought that Earl Cairns wasna richt
In gie'in' wi' his motion the new Franchise Bill a dicht?
Quo' the Deil, I've that loon in my claws geyan ticht,
And I'll mak' his legal snoot squeel some mornin'!"

"Although I am the Deil, I've mair gumption than a few
Wha get upon their feet to yatter like the kangaroo!
Can ye wonner I deserted them wha nearly gar'd me spue
Wi' their silly legislation in the mornin'?"

"The women, too, it seems, alack! are no to get a vote,
Because 'tis said they hae nae sense wha wear the petticoat!
But what o' them that wear the Breeks, and yet think naethin' o't,
And read 'the leading articles' ilk mornin'?"

Then said we to the Deil, "Gin the measure disna pass,
What wad ye gar us dae?" "Oh, jist threaten and harass,
Then let the people rise, and a' bravely gang *en masse*
To the empty Hoose o' Lords in the mornin'!"

"Your Premier has braved before the legislative storm,
And noo is anchored safe within the ocean o' Reform;
And sae for years to come the Lords will find their seats are warm
For their truculent audacity that mornin'!"

Then the Deevil vanished wi' a grin, and left us wi' the Peers,
To brave the prood usurpers and despise a' craven fears;
And marchin' on to victory amidst exultin' cheers,
We hail immortal Gladstone on this mornin'!"

J.W. M'Laren, Machineman (the Laddie Bard).

West Lothian Courier, 26 July 1884.

31. [Hail, Liberals one and all]

In the autumn of 1884, the *West Lothian Courier* held a competition for the best poem 'bearing on the Bathgate Franchise Demonstration, as representing the voice and mind of all parties, from the labourer upwards.' Winners not only received publication in the newspaper, in special columns of 'Demonstration Poetry' on 11 October 1884, but also could see their poems being distributed during the demonstration itself. The *Courier* described how, on its cart in the procession (which was equipped with a printing press) three 'printers' devils' were 'busy printing with all the rapidity of modern machinery, and circulating with liberal hands the *Courier* prize poems, which contained staunch and true Liberal sentiments.' 'Hail, Liberals one and all', as a prizewinner, would have been among these. The competition enabled the *West Lothian Courier* to burnish its Liberal credentials, supplied free copy to distribute and print, and advertised the extent to which the 'people's poets' of the area backed Gladstone and reform.

James Wilson of Linlithgow is unknown as a poet, but his poem is typical in its anti-Tory sentiments and stirring call for a united voice from the disenfranchised workers. The judges of the poetry competition also doubtless admired his emphasis, in the closing lines, on the importance of the newspaper press and its writers in swaying popular sentiment. His poem and other competition poems were published alongside a detailed account of the Bathgate demonstration.

Kirstie Blair

(Awarded Second Prize in *Courier's* Competition.)

Hail, Liberals one and all
Respond to duty's call,
Triumphantly we shall
 Win the day.
Lift freedom's banner high,
For victory is nigh;
Liberty! shall be our cry
 In the fray.

In spite of Tory peers,
With their haughty flouts and jeers
And sentimental sneers,
 We'll unite;
And with one voice we will
As loyal subjects still
Demand the Franchise Bill
 As our right.

Strong-handed sons of toil
Who seek your daily moil
Deep, deep beneath the soil,
 Be ye brave.
Break the oppressor's spell,

Let the voice of labour swell
O'er mountain, hill, and dell
Like a wave.

All who the hammer wield
And tillers in the field,
Your birthright must not yield
To the peers;
Ye workmen show your power
In this your trying hour,
As Tory clouds do lower
Full of sneers.

Cast off the feudal yoke,
Let justice give the stroke
To all our foes who mock
At our cause.
Aloud your rights proclaim,
And break the feudal chain,
Too long a blot and stain
On our laws.

Revolution we don't want,
Nor Redistribution cant,
Nor other Tory rant
We demand;
Two million Britons wait
For recognition in the state,
And weary at the gate
They do stand.

Ye lads who wield the pen,
Come, quit yourself like men
The people's rights to gain
And defend.
Up, lads, and show your might,
And aid us in the fight,—
The press will do the right
Till the end.

Linlithgow Bridge, Linlithgow.

JAMES WILSON.

West Lothian Courier, 11 October 1884.

32. Invitation to the Bathgate Demonstration, October 4, 1884.

This poem, like 'Hail, Liberals one and all', appeared in the *West Lothian Courier*, a week before the competition poems were published (thus, just before rather than just after the Bathgate demonstration). 'Willie' and the 'Grand Old Man' are William Gladstone, popular hero of the 1884 Reform Act. In September and early October 1884, both Gladstone and the deeply conservative and anti-reform Lord Salisbury had given speeches in Scotland. Indeed, Salisbury had given a fervently anti-reform speech in Glasgow during the week before this poem appeared. The poem represents the working people of Bathgate and surroundings as staunchly Liberal and warns the Tories 'Tho' we're poor we study politics/ As best we can.' It is a rousing account from an apparent working man's perspective, ending with a typical plea to remember the triumphs of 1832. 'W. A.' is unidentified.

Kirstie Blair

Arise, auld Bathgate, now's the hour
To send thy Liberal sons wi' power,
In their thousands three or fower,
 To wave their mottoed banners gran'
In favour of the Franchise Bill
 And Grand Old Man.

Move on, ye Liberals, ane and a',
And help auld Willie in the draw
Against the Peers that crouselly craw;
 Whene'er he seeks the people's right,
Help him to knock them 'gainst the wa'
 Wi' a' your might.

The Tory Peers too plainly speak;
The last time that the Hoose did meet,
They cast the bill doon at their feet,
 And thro' they wadna let it gang;
But Willie is gaun up tae beat
 Them a' ere lang.

Neist time he gangs tae London toon
Their Tory pride he'll hurl't doon,
And then he'll gar them sit and croon
 In dolefu' mood some ither sang;
He'll mak' them rue the card they've played,
 And that ere lang.

And when they meet I'll wad a groat
He'll send it right back on the spot,
That bill for which he's truly fought,
 And ask the Peers to let it pass;

And if they don't he'll mow them down
Like withered grass.

He'll peel the coronet off each heid,
As sure as Faither Adam's deid;
He'll mak' them skulk wi' eident speed,
Forbye he'll mak' them sairly rue
The wrongous evil deed they've dune,
The haughty crew.

Do Salisbury and his colleagues think
That brains are bought wi' gowden clink,
Or that Liberals a' are on the brink,
Or overwhelmed in wild insanity?
Na, na, my lord, if that's your thought,
It's only vanity.

We ken tae seek and ha'e oor rights
In spite of Peers and Tory knights,
Or any other that scorns and slights
The British Liberal working man;
Tho' we're poor we study politics
As best we can.

Now be up, ye men, be firm and true,
Remember them of Thirty-two,
How that they fought and struggled thro'
And gained their rights against oppression;
So three cheers for Willie brave and true—
He'll win next session.

W. A.

West Lothian Courier, 4 October 1884.

33. Reform: A Woman's Work

Janet K. Muir was a Kilmarnock-based poet who published *Lyrics and Poems of Nature and Life* (Paisley, 1878) and was a regular contributor of verse to the *Kilmarnock Standard*, as well as to *The Present Truth*, the herald of the International Missionary Society. This poem focuses on the role of women in the 1884 Reform Bill agitation and highlights how the seemingly small contributions that women made were nevertheless part of the 'vanguard of Reform'. The poem depicts a woman twisting a ribbon, which will be worn by a reformer during a procession. Each stanza begins with the phrase 'Only twisting a ribbon' – suggesting the insignificance of the act when compared to 'the noble deeds of time' – but this idea is then repeatedly subverted. The poem demonstrates how such small acts, together, helped further the reform cause: it is argued that such work was needed to create the banners for reform processions, for instance. (Muir herself worked as a milliner.) The poem also states that these women will work in honour of those who fought for 'fadeless Thirty-Two'; it was common for the reform verse of 1884 to valorise the 'veterans' of the 1832 Reform Bill.

Michael Shaw

"Whiles makin' breist-knots for a brither,
I twine my sangs and them thegither."

Only twisting a ribbon about her fingers ends;
Only doing the little task that God in His goodness sends—
A task that will ne'er be noted 'mong the noble deeds of time,
For a woman's work is of small account in this busy British clime,
But the woman works with a willing grace, with heart-beat true and warm,
As she turns the tiny thing about to the measure of Reform.

Only twisting a ribbon! for the men who, bye and bye,
Will walk abroad with a steady pace, with glad and sparkling eye—
With banners waving overhead, with drum-beat loud and clear,
For the freedom of two million souls disenfranchised far and near,
March on! March on! with banners bright, with ribbons green or gold,
And be your watchword, "Manhood's right," the war-cry of old.

Only twisting a ribbon in a little country town,
To gather in a goodly knot Britannia's clusters brown;
Her sons and sires of little note, to noble Lords and bold,
Who mind not of the mighty host that vanquished them of old;
By all our fathers fought and won, in fadeless Thirty-two,
We'll rest not till the work is done in Freedom's cause anew.

Only twisting a ribbon! yet happily forging a nail,
For the downfall of each stubborn wrong when reason shall prevail;
Ah! the smallest deed may have import deep, and weighty a woman's song
As she twines the tiny threads about in the web of right and wrong,
Content to see with a secret grace, through tear-drops starting warm,

Her silken snood born on apace in the vanguard of Reform.

Janet K. Muir, Kilmarnock, Sept. 1884

Kilmarnock Standard, 13 September 1884.

On the Franchise Demonstration of the 6th Inst.

Reply to Marion Bernstein on the Franchise Demonstration of the 6th Ult.

Answer to M. A. Smith.

In this trio of poems, a debate plays out between two of the *Glasgow Weekly Herald's* prominent female contributors, Marion Bernstein and M. A. Smith. Bernstein (1846–1906) had been ardently advocating women's suffrage in the poetry columns of Glasgow newspapers since the 1870s. One of her earlier works in this vein is another argument in verse with a female counterpart: 'Woman's Rights and Wrongs' (*Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 27 February 1875) responds to Jessie Russell's 'Woman's Rights *versus* Woman's Wrongs', which had appeared the week before. Russell's poem rails against the mistreatment of women and the devaluation of their labour, but does not view access to the franchise as the most relevant solution: 'I may be wrong in opinion, but still to my mind it seems / As if Parliament, Council or Congress could never be womanly themes'. For Bernstein, the vote is always the answer – as she puts it in her response to Russell, 'Let women vote away their wrongs / And vote for righteous laws.' Her pro-franchise poems include 'Oh! I Wish that All Women Had Power to Vote' (25 April 1874), 'A Dream' (10 July 1875) and 'Onward Yet! Upward Yet!' (16 September 1876), all for the *Weekly Mail*, as well as 'A Woman's Plea' (20 January 1883) for the *Weekly Herald*. Bernstein published much of her newspaper verse in a book called *Mirren's Musings* in 1876, but her post-1876 poetry, which includes the two poems anthologised here, remained uncollected until the ASLS edition of her complete works, *A Song of Glasgow Town* (ed. Edward H. Cohen, Anne R. Fertig and Linda Fleming), was published in 2013. Smith's 'Reply to Marion Bernstein' is briefly described in the editor's notes but the text of the poem is not included.

'On the Franchise Demonstration' expresses Bernstein's frustration at the lack of a female presence at the recent reform demonstration in Glasgow. In her view, women should be organising themselves like any other subset of workers: 'Where were your trades?' Smith is sceptical of Bernstein's outrage on this point. According to the editors of *A Song of Glasgow Town*, Smith 'expresses anger at those who "say a woman's right sphere is her home" and anticipates a subsequent stage of political discourse' (256), but in context it is clear that Smith's response is in fact heavily sarcastic. Her thanks to Bernstein for 'tak[ing] us in hand' and pointing her more apathetic sisters on to 'glory' are not sincere – though Bernstein may not be her only target. Her attitude to the 'liege lords and masters at home', who will be left behind to struggle with the housework, is somewhat ambiguous. In 'Answer to M. A. Smith', Bernstein bypasses Smith's more fanciful imagined consequences of female participation in reform agitation – rows of fainting demonstrators menaced by police violence, cannibalism – to attack the argument about the undesirability of leaving the domestic sphere on its most literal level. If a housewife can leave home to drink tea with friends, surely she can do so to cast a vote. These poems exemplify two of Bernstein's most common arguments: that voting should be a demystified, everyday civic action that is not at odds with more traditionally 'feminine' pursuits, and that enfranchising women would produce superior political outcomes that extend beyond improving the lot of women themselves. The 'Answer' ends on a similar

note to 'A Dream', in which 'There were female chiefs in the Cabinet, / (Much better than males I'm sure!) / And the Commons were three-parts feminine, / While the Lords were seen no more!'

Honor Rieley

On the Franchise Demonstration of the 6th Inst.

Women of Glasgow,
What do you mean?
Why were you idle
All through such a scene?

Where were your banners?
Where were your trades?
Have women no need
Of political aids?

Much work for small wages,
Great wrongs, which few note,
Are yours, till you right things
By getting the vote.

Now, when are you going
To make such a show
For feminine franchise,
I'm anxious to know?

Lay sewing and cooking
Aside for one day;
Assemble by thousands
In splendid array.

I don't mean in dresses
Of costly expense;
I mean in the splendour
Of bright common-sense.

Prove your right to the vote
By the thousands who crave it;
And with steady persistence—
To ask is to have it.

MARION BERNSTEIN

Glasgow Weekly Herald, 20 September 1884.

Reply to Marion Bernstein on the Franchise Demonstration of the 6th Ult.
(See the *Weekly Herald* issue of 20th Sept.)

Well, thank goodness that some one can take us in hand,
Such poor, weak, silly things that we are;
Who but us would leave politics all to men folks?
Why, such weakness is quite beyond par.
They, of course, say a woman's right sphere is her home.
Bringing babes up the way they should go,
That a strong-minded female is quite out of place
Making puddings and such like, you know.
But just stop till we've made up our minds for a vote,
Won't we show them a thing or two, when
It shall come to our turn in procession to march,
Leaving all our home cares to them, then.
Only fancy, our liege lords and masters at home,
With the house in a litter and mess,
All the meals to look after, the beds, too, to make,
And the children to wash and to dress.
A "cag'd lord," indeed, were as nothing compar'd
To the chafing and fry they'd be in;
But of course such wee matters will not trouble *us*
When a nation's reform *we* begin.
With all our "home influence" flung to the winds,
And our feminine modesty—bah!
If our "lords of creation" can't act for themselves,
It's quite time we came forward (oh, la!).
And let no one imagine we'll stop at a vote—
That will be but one little wedge in.
We don't work by halves when we set about things,
And are not likely with this to begin.
After that let not men look for meals well prepar'd,
For their comfort eight times out of nine;
They may think themselves bless'd if they do not, poor souls,
On a dish of stew'd politics dine.
Nay, worse still, spite of cannibal laws now enforced,
A roast Salisbury may come in their way,
Or a hash of the Premier, that nice "Grand Old Man,"
Whom they can't have too much of, they say;
But we don't want to scare them, so let's to the point
Of this grand demonstration of ours—
Of the how and the when we are gaily to march
In the pride of our feminine powers.
In all splendour, though, mind you, sense, common, or not,
May content some with common array,
But be sure, if there's fin'ry at all to be got,
'Twill be flaunted abroad on that day.

But a word to the wise, in good time for your ears,
The police will be there beyond doubt,
And they may not regard us as females at all
When in men's work we choose to turn out.
And that "*Peabody*" somebody else, had a plan,
He suggested it once to the Macs,
'Twas in lieu of the pease that on each hundredth head
He the power of the baton should tax.
Now to save him the trouble, the Macs too as well,
I've an idea just come to my mind,
That you pick for each hundredth the poor weakly ones,
Who to faintings are too much inclined.
It will give them a rest if they only contrive
Just to drop when he counts ninety-nine.
That will suit everybody, and save them a trudge,
As they're merely "laid out in a line."
But now these preliminaries so far arrang'd,
There's a question we can't do without—
Who's to head our procession, to glory lead on,
Who's our leader? Now, Marion, speak out.

M. A. SMITH.

Glasgow Weekly Herald, 4 October 1884.

Answer to M. A. Smith.

Dear M. A. Smith,
Who are you joking with,
And what about?
I've taken endless trouble to find out.
Would you wish women-folks to stay at home,
And never roam;
Even to church, or just a friend to see,
And take a cup of tea?
Iron machines, we know, need rest for oiling,
Can wives always be toiling?
Even hard-worked wives contrive some time or other
To spend a day with mother.
What I propose is, that, instead of going
To mother, you'll be showing
Your interest in laws, as well as labours,
Both for yourselves and neighbours.
And when we get the vote,
I wish you all to note
It takes no longer to vote members in
To Parliament than School Boards. Did you win
The School Board vote for nothing? No; you use it
And none say you abuse it.
Your votes will have a different effect
To votes of fools and drunkards, I expect.
We women need to use our strength of mind—
Strong-minded men we very seldom find;
And feeble-minded voting is the cause
Of all unrighteous laws.
You heard of that poor outcast lately found
Dead on the open ground?—
A little child, homeless, unaided. Note
The cruel wrong. Each widowed mother's vote
Would tend to change the laws which now we see
Suffering such things to be.
Pure principles and tenderness of heart
Should in our laws have part.
I say, 'tis woman's right to make this so.
And who can answer, No?

MARION BERNSTEIN.

Glasgow Weekly Herald, 18 October 1884.

35. Election Song.

This song was published as a single-page broadside in November 1885. The poem is worthy of interest, particularly given the attribution of a female writer, and the position adopted, which is scornful of local Liberal interests: Thomas Glen Coats (1846-1922) was a major local thread employer in the Paisley area and a well-known Liberal. The song itself relates to the recent contest to decide who would be the Liberal candidate and the choices that would be offered the electorate at the general election later in the month. Coats had backed W.B. Barbour against the Liberal challenge from James Clark (another local thread manufacturer and the town's provost). In the end, Barbour stood against the Tory challenger, Major McKerrel of the 1st Ayrshire Rifles, who would have been the choice of the 'Indignant Dame', in a contest that was dominated by the question of the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Reference to the "Primrose League' dames' is significant. Paisley was a strong-hold of the (Tory) Primrose League in Scotland, boasting some of its first and largest habitations (branches). In 1886 an all female habitation was established in Paisley that soon recruited 800 members.

Barbour won the election, although the Liberal majority was reduced – showing that franchise extension did not simply favour Liberal interests. The turn-out of the new expanded electorate was 88%.

Catriona M.M. Macdonald

Air— "Conceive me if you can." — "Patience."

In Paisley, one Txxxxx Gxxx Cxxxx
Believed the best way to get votes
Was to spout and revile
In a virulent style,
Which chivalry's absence denotes.

Now I daresay you'll hardly believe
(And I know when you hear this you'll grieve)
That he sneered and called names
At the "Primrose League" dames—
A subject he'd much better leave.

For there hardly can be any doubt
They're a class he knows nothing about;
And one fact he won't let
Us a moment forget
Is—when 'Rads' came in, 'manners' went out!

His quotations make this very plain,
That his studies won't injure his brain;
But e'en nursery rhymes
Are not happy sometimes,
When we don't know when to refrain.

AN INDIGNANT DAME.

Paisley, 18 November 1885.

36. The Song of the Millionaire.

The *Glasgow Weekly Mail* published several poems about Highland land agitation in 1884, including 'Glenelg' (26 January), 'The Cry of the Crofter' by Keith Robertson (22 November) and 'The Exiles' by Henry Thomas Macdonald (13 December). These poems do not explicitly connect the crofters' grievances to the nationwide agitation in favour of the extension of the franchise – even though, by making many crofters 'ten-pound occupiers', the Reform Act would offer them an avenue to seek some degree of redress. 'The Song of the Millionaire', published on 27 December, does make this link. It references a specific legal case, *Winans v. Macrae*, which was eventually decided before the Court of Session in 1885. The tenant of Kintail, William Louis Winans (1823–1897), was the son of an American inventor of locomotive technology who had made his fortune expanding the family railroad business to Russia. He brought a case of trespass against a local man, Murdoch Macrae, whose lamb had strayed off the road and grazed on land which Winans wanted to convert into a deer forest. Winans went on to lose the case, but his zealous pursuit of such a petty complaint makes him a perfect representative of the impunity enjoyed by the landowning class. However, after four stanzas of boasting about the oppressive power of the almighty dollar, the millionaire ends on a note of trepidation that something may be about to change. And he is correct: the franchise bill which he obscurely senses may bring about his comeuppance paved the way for the formation of the Crofters' Party and the passage of the Crofters' Holdings Act of 1886.

Honor Rieley

Mr Winans, the American millionaire, in his examination in the Kintail "Pet Lamb" Case, declared, "My desire is to get rid of the nineteen cottages and their inhabitants. I shan't leave a stone unturned till I get rid of them, in order to protect my deer." — *Daily Mail*.

I'm a Yankee millionaire,
From across the big Atlantic,
And I hold it is not fair
For the poor to drive me frantic.
I've appealed for legal help
To abolish nineteen cottars,
And for this they loudly yelp—
Wives and pet lambs, sons and daughters.

My two hundred thousand acres—
Well, here I have no more—
Why should people take the shakers
Just because from shore to shore
I decide to have a playground,
And turn the critters out,
That o'er their corn and hay ground
My brave deer may run and rout?

They may wring their hands and holler,

They may weep and whine and cry,
But there's nothing beats the "Dollar,"
Guess they found it so in Skye.
If a cottar dares to grumble,
And refuses to "vamoose,"
Guess he'll learn to eat pie humble
When the gunboats come to "cruise."

Then hurrah for Yankee dollars!
No Government I fear,
Lord-Advocates nor scholars,
Dare put MEN before my deer.
The laws are made for monied men,
The earth and sea is theirs,
And Scotchmen are but vermin,
Like the rabbits and the hares.

We can buy them, we can sell them,
We can hunt them through the earth,
We can starve them, we can tell them
Land Lords owned them from their birth.
Their laws are on no statute book,
So far their power is *nil*,
But I yet may have to take my hook—
Confound that FRANCHISE BILL!

WILL DICKSON.

Whiteinch, Dec. 19.

Glasgow Weekly Mail, 27 December 1884.

**Part Four: Poems relating to the Representation
of the People Act, 1918**

37. Regrets.

This is one of numerous political poems published in Aberdeen in 1908, when a high-profile election was held in the city to choose the rector of Aberdeen University. The candidates for this role were the reigning prime minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, and his parliamentary rival, the Unionist Edward Carson. The suffragettes despised Asquith, whom they saw as a traitor, and they agitated across the country to undermine his premiership; there is even evidence to suggest that some suffragettes were planning to assassinate him.¹² This concerted effort to challenge Asquith is reflected in the Aberdeen rectorial election campaign, where the suffragettes of Aberdeen got behind Asquith's opponent, Carson. The poem appears in the only known issue of *The Suffragette*, a magazine published by the Aberdeen University Woman's Suffrage Association. Asquith is the speaker of this poem, and he is branded a disloyal hypocrite. The parodic voice of Asquith states that he wishes he had got women on his side during the election campaign, as they were a substantial demographic, and he also scolds himself for forgetting the repercussions of betraying the suffragettes.

Michael Shaw

Air—"Sir Solomon Levi."

My name is H. H. Asquith,
And I live at Downing Street,
It's there I change my arguments
To cover my retreat.
I've second-handed principles,
And everything in that line,
Yet all the men who vote for me
Are a hundred and fifty-nine.

I hoped I once would Rector be,
In far-north Aberdeen;
But now my hope is turned to fear,
I dream what might have been.
I wish I'd got the women's vote,
It would have seen me through;
But they complain that my support
Of them was far from true.

They know when voters come to me,
Their grievances to air,
However dull they seem to be,
I offer them a chair.
And when I've listened wearily
To what they had to say,
I claim it is my chiefest care,
I don't send votes away.

¹² Neil Tweedie, 'Suffragette "plot to assassinate Asquith"', *The Telegraph*, 29 September 2006.

I wish I'd met the women so,
When justice was their plea,
Not left them standing on the step
Till I had time to flee.
Men say they have ability
And would have worked for me;
But foolishly I did not see
That they would voters be.

Yet I hear that of the women,
There are three will vote for me,
They are Flora Laura, Little Dick,
And a second T.C.B.
I'll take their votes with pleasure,
But I can have no respect
For their intelligence, who'd try
A foeman to elect.

The Suffragette, 28 October 1908.

38. Carson's Farewell to Aberdeen.

Unlike the previous poem, 'Regrets' (written by suffragettes to mock the prime minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, who was a candidate in the 1908 Aberdeen University rectorial election), this poem is written by a supporter of Asquith, and it attacks the prime minister's rival in that election – the Unionist, Edward Carson. This poem was published in *The Premier*, an Aberdeen journal established as a herald for the campaign to install Asquith as rector. In this poem, which is set to the tune of Robert Burns's 'Ae Fond Kiss', Carson is portrayed addressing his supporters, Unionists and suffragettes, after losing the rectorial election. The poem gleefully anticipates the failure of the Carson campaign, and it casts Carson as weak and melodramatic. Carson states that he regrets his candidature and Asquith is portrayed as 'too strong for me to fight with'.

Michael Shaw

(To the tune of "Ae Fond Kiss.")

Unionists, we now must sever!
Suffragettes, farewell for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge ye,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage ye.

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

Now I mourn my candidature—
Solely due to my good-nature;
Lansdowne, Milner—both declined it:¹³
Why, Saint Patrick! did I mind it?

Had I ne'er consented blindly
To their plan, proposed sae kindly,—
Erin, ne'er from thee departed,
I had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee well, victorious Asquith!—
Far too strong for me to fight with!
May the Liberal Lord Rector
Prove the 'Varsity's Protector!

Unionists, we now must sever!
Suffragettes, farewell for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge ye,

¹³ Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne (1845-1927); Alfred Milner, 1st Viscount Milner (1854-1925).

Warring sighs and groans I'll wage ye.

The Premier, 30 June 1908.

39. [Green grow the rashes O]

In 1914 two suffragettes, Frances Parker and Ethel Moorhead, attempted to bomb Robert Burns's birthplace cottage in Alloway. Although this attack was widely characterised as an assault against Burns personally, there is little evidence to suggest that the suffragettes felt any antagonism towards him. In fact, suffragettes like Helen Crawford styled his poem 'The Rights of Woman' as proto-suffragette, while 'Scots Wha Hae' was frequently sung by Scottish suffragettes at processions. This comical poem, which appropriates Burns's 'Green Grow the Rashes O', was published in the Glasgow socialist newspaper *Forward*, which was broadly supportive of the suffrage cause: it frequently published articles by Sylvia Pankhurst, and it ran a regular column by Janie Allan, a prominent Glaswegian suffragette and socialist who was known for encouraging hunger strikes in prisons. The poem comments on the suffragette's signature militant tactic: window smashing. The speaker of the poem sardonically implores the reader to give votes to women, in order to stop their violence; we are told that their violence may soon escalate if their demands are not met. Although comical, and not especially supportive of the suffragettes themselves, the poem does wittily highlight the fact that extending the franchise to women would end the vandalism. The poem is attributed to *Votes for Women*, one of the leading London suffragette newspapers; the author, T. E. J., is unidentified.

Michael Shaw

Green grow the rashes O,
Bang go the glasses O,
We have no pane, dear Mother, now,
Within our window sashes O.

For guid's sake gi'e the lasses Votes,
Or onything they fancy O,
Or they will soon be at our throats,
They're gettin' maist unchancy O.
Green grow the rashes O,
Another window crashes O,
'Twere better far to gi'e them votes
Than thole sic awfu' bashes O!

T. E. J. in *Votes for Women*.

Forward, 1 March 1913.

40. The Suffragette's Nut Cracked.

Much of the poetry on the suffragettes takes a clear stance on the debate regarding votes for women, but we find ambivalent poetry too. Many of the suffragette-inspired poems in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, for instance, are conflicted on the 'votes for women' issue. This poem focuses on a local Edinburgh suffragette, Lady Steel (Barbara Joanna Paterson Steel) who stood for Edinburgh Council (St Stephen's Ward) following the death of the councillor, Baillie Clark. The poem begins with a complimentary tone towards Steel and the suffragette cause, appearing to share Lady Steel's position that the Council is 'devious' and that it can only be cured by 'admit[ting] the female section'. The speaker also states that women, through their knowledge of children, will be better able to explain the infant mortality rate. But by the end of the poem, the speaker becomes more conservative, noting that the best way women can 'bless the earth' is by influencing men for good, by remaining 'by the hearth'. The poem reflects the complexity and ambivalence of feeling that some people had towards the 'votes for women' campaign.

Michael Shaw

The Council in its devious ways
From right to wrong for ever strays,
The reason why? At last we know—
Did Lady Steel last night not show?

Before the Council reach perfection,
They must admit the female section.
'Tis curious how this simple plan
Ne'er dawned upon the mind of man.

Guid faith! To make a free confession,
The public long had the impression—
When reading o'er their silly speeches—
They were just women wearing breeches.

But, oh! what can a lady know
'Bout sweeping streets or clearing snow
Or water and electric mains,
Our cable cars and sewage drains?

But, then, she kens about the weans,
'Bout wives and maidens' aches and pains;
She'll quickly tell the reason why
The infant death-rate is so high?

How children should be clothed and fed,
How to be washed and put to bed;
Give information, greatly prized,
Of how all germs are sterilised!

No doubt when ladies there appear,
The moral atmosphere will clear,
Be of [indeciph.] to smell and hearing,
From smoke and drink and vulgar swearing.

Men must be in a waefu' plight,
When women weak can put them right—
For do our churchmen not now say,
"Twas woman first led man astray."

When she her equal rights has won,
Will she not find her prestige gone?
*For [indeciph.] where [indeciph] strive,*¹⁴
The strongest only can survive.

What can soft-hearted woman do?
If she's to fight with such a crew;
Her sighs and tears would be in vain;
For man, rude man, the prize *will* gain.

If women want to bless the earth
Their power infinite's by the hearth;
Man's every influence for good
Is found in wife and sisterhood.

— Tra Quair.

Edinburgh Evening Dispatch, 31 October 1907.

¹⁴ The print quality of this issue deteriorates towards the bottom of the page, making this line indecipherable. It might read, '*For favours*, where the masses strive'.

41. The Great Demonstration.

On 9 October 1909, a large historical pageant was staged on the streets of Edinburgh to campaign for women's suffrage. The pageant was organised by the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and led by Flora Drummond, a prominent suffragette from Arran who was commonly referred to as 'the General' by fellow suffragettes. The pageant featured floats, which presented various key historical Scottish women, including Queen Margaret and Mary Queen of Scots. This iconic event inspired 'The Great Demonstration', a poem which appears on a page of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* alongside several large photographs from the 'Suffragette Pageant'. The poem is largely descriptive and broadly neutral in its presentation of the suffragettes. It begins by recounting a conventional morning and then moves on to describe a 'spoor' of suffragettes, who cover the Burghmuir links. The poem notes the various different types of women who participated and comments on their banners (as well as their colours: green, white and purple – the colours of the WSPU). The reference to 'Mrs Spankhurst' reflects a mocking tone towards the suffragettes that can be found in several *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* poems.

Michael Shaw

A Fragment.

(From the collection of Mrs Spankhurst.)

The morn of Ninth October broke
'Mid clouds of murky city smoke,
And in their courses like the stars
Began to run the city cars,
 Pulled by a cable strong;
Which never jolts or breaks or jars
 Except when things go wrong.

Fair Princes Street awoke to life,
 And active business men
Left bed and breakfast, child and wife,
 To reach their desks by ten;
And soon the busy forenoon passed
Like autumn leaves on winter blast.

Meanwhile the links at Burghmuir
Were getting covered with the spoor
Of Suffragettes, who formed in ranks,
Intending soon to stretch their shanks
 By marching into town.

All sorts and shapes were gathered there,
The young, the old, the fat, the spare;
Their blooming cheeks and tresses gay
Seemed newly done-up for the day,
 Their boots were black and brown.

High overhead their banner flies
Its bilious pattern to the skies,
The white their innocence denotes
 And gentle winning ways;
The green their plans for getting votes
 And shrinking from men's gaze;
While in the purple you may spy
The hue that clouds the brow or eye,
 Which these fair women smite.

The woman who those colours chose
Mayhap was thinking of her woes,
Or thought to mortify her foes,
Or match the colours of her hose,
 Or maybe she was tight.
But banner like to it, I ween,
Was ne'er by mortal herald seen.

Edinburgh Evening Dispatch, 11 October 1909.

42. Shakespeare Up To Date.

Because most newspapers in the early twentieth century either backed the Liberal or Tory parties, which were both broadly opposed to 'votes for women', suffragettes created their own magazines and newspapers to publish articles and verse. For instance, several university suffrage societies produced their own magazines, and these are often fruitful sources for suffragette poetry. This particular poem, which is also a dramatic sketch, appears in *Jus Suffragii Alumnae*, the magazine of the Queen Margaret College Suffrage Society (Glasgow). Dr Marion Gilchrist, the first female graduate of the University of Glasgow, was the Honorary President of the society at this time. This poem, which becomes a poetic conversation between three suffragettes, appropriates *Macbeth*, specifically the 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow' soliloquy. The speaker of the first section of the sketch calls for the Liberals (towards whom the suffragettes were especially hostile) to get 'Out, out', as their promises are 'shadows void of substance'; their words are 'full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing'. The three suffragettes who stand in for the Weird Sisters of *Macbeth* converse as they wait in a square near Westminster, discussing how they can trouble Asquith, the Liberal prime minister, and prevent him from sleeping.

Michael Shaw

Awaiting the Passing of the Bill.

TO-MORROW, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of the session's time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted bills
The way to dusty death. Out, out, false Liberals!
Your promises are shadows, void of substance,
That strut their hour upon your Lib'ral platforms
And then are heard no more. Yea, they are tales
Told by false quibblers, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing!

SCENE—A Square near Westminster.

THUNDER—Enter three Suffragettes.

First Suffragette—Where has thou been, sister?

Second Suffragette— Doing time.

Third Suffragette—Sister, where thou?

First Suffragette—The Commons were discussing votes for women

And talked and talked and talked. Give me, quoth I:

Aroint thee, pest! th' ill-mannered crew replied.

Now Asquith's gone to Downing Street, Master o' the Cabinet,

But in a bus I'll thither ride

And with two staunch friends by my side

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

Second Suffragette—I'll give him my mind.

First Suffragette—Thou'rt kind.

Third Suffragette—And I.

First Suffragette—I myself take all the bother.

We will make his troubles grow!
From every quarter shall they blow
I' the shipman's card.
I will draw him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent house lid;
He shall live a man forbid
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
On his doorstep aye shall float
A tempestuous petticoat.

F. M. N.

Jus Suffragii Alumnae, January 1909.

43. [Newington Butts were lively]

Many suffragettes were imprisoned for their militant actions, and several wrote poetry in their cells, which they 'smuggled' from prison. This poem appears in *Holloway Jingles*, a collection of poems written by militant suffragettes serving sentences in Holloway Prison during March and April 1912 for smashing windows in Central London. These poems were later compiled by a Glaswegian inmate, Nancy A. John, and published by the Glasgow branch of the WSPU (the militant Women's Social and Political Union). This poem is by Dr Alice Stewart Ker, a Scottish physician educated in Dublin who often went under the alias of Jane Warton. She was also a supporter of the temperance movement and became involved in the Theosophical Society. Ker was released early from her sentence in Holloway Prison, which was either due to illness or forcible feeding. The poem recounts Ker's trial by jury and it depicts the judge, 'Justice Lawrie'. The speaker states that 'The lies piled up like snow drifts' and implies that the judge was biased. The poem is set to the song 'Annie Laurie', a Scottish song believed to have been written by William Douglas.

Michael Shaw

Tune—Annie Laurie.

Newington Butts were lively,
When session's time fell due,
For there sat Justice Lawrie,
With twelve good men and true:
And sat to sentence me—
And except for Justice Lawrie,
I'd be far away and free.

The lies piled up like snow drifts,
The women's case looked wan;
Their answers were the bravest
That e'er judge frowned upon:
And a biassed judge was he—
And except for Justice Lawrie,
I'd be far away and free.

Hear the Jew as witness lying,
Measuring damages in feet;
And to hear the owner sighing,
When it proves too much, is sweet.
And all the world can see,
That except for Justice Lawrie,
I'd be far away and free.

—Dr. Alice Ker.

Holloway Jingles, (Glasgow: WSPU, 1912), p.25.

44. Full Tide.

Like the preceding poem by Alice Ker, this poem appears in *Holloway Jingles*. Ker travelled to London to participate in the window smashing campaign like several other Scottish suffragettes, including Helen Crawford and the author of this poem, A. A. Wilson, who also contributed a second poem to *Holloway Jingles*, 'An End'. 'Full Tide' heralds the fact that 'the tide has turned' and attempts to encourage this change: 'Oh rising tide, flow in!'. This image is most likely an allegory for the rise of women's rights; indeed, the tide is feminised by being compared to a 'bosom'. A boatman is also depicted: he has to find a new place to moor his vessel, suggesting that men will have to change and adapt to the new tide.

Michael Shaw

The tide has turned—Oh, rising tide, flow in!

As snow upon the far horizon blue
I see the crested waves in long outline,
And soon the silver glitter of sunshine,
Shall shimmer on the surfaces near to.

The tide has turned—Oh rising tide, flow in!

The tide has turned—Oh rising tide, flow in!

The edges of the gently lifting levels
Make lengthened arcs along the gold sands pouring.
Hark, boatman! higher up thy craft needs mooring,
An thou wouldst save it from encroaching revels.

The tide has turned—Oh rising tide, flow in!

Oh full tide flowing high— roll in, roll in!

No need to meet it, o'er the hills 'tis rimming
Higher and higher yet, its waters welling,
All obstacles are swept into its swelling,
And out to sea upon its bosom brimming

The eager boats have gone—Oh flowing tide roll on!

—A. A. Wilson.

Holloway Jingles, (Glasgow: WSPU, 1912), p.20.

45. Women Shall be Free

Helen Crawford was a Glaswegian suffragette who later became a prominent member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and a town councillor for Dunoon. She was a highly active suffragette who participated in the same window smashing campaign that led to the publication of *Holloway Jingles*. Although Crawford does not appear to have contributed to *Holloway Jingles*, she saw poetry and song as key tools for the suffragettes. In her autobiography, which has been digitised by the Marx Memorial Library, she highlights her appreciation for Robert Burns and the fact that she encouraged fellow suffragettes to sing 'Scots Wha Hae' when agitating. The poem below, which appears in a suffragette convention programme, is evidence that she also wrote political songs, and this one offers a rallying cry for suffragettes. The poem's refrain stresses that the call for women's enfranchisement is a 'just demand' and that the suffragettes will not back down until 'women shall be free'. The poem also explains the logic behind the suffragettes' position: women are portrayed as hard workers who are also capable of holding high office – Queen Victoria is held up as a woman who has 'graced our country's throne / For half-a-hundred years'. The concluding stanza instructs suffragettes to put pressure on those who have made 'pledges' to them.

Michael Shaw

A good heart and a steady mind,
Our purpose clear in view,
The whole wide world shall understand
What women mean to do.
And have they fixed the when and where,
And what is women's place?
Just what we can and will, no less,
To benefit our race.
And shall they scorn our just demand,
And shall we voteless be?
To spread our cause, we shall not pause,
Till women shall be free.

What do they fear, who hold them back,
Who number half the race?
That we the needful courage lack
To fill a worthy place.
The sex that toils in home and mill,
That shares their smiles and fears,
The sex that graced our country's throne
For half-a-hundred years.
And shall they scorn our just demand,
And shall we voteless be?
To spread our cause, we shall not pause,
Till women shall be free.

What now of pledges freely made

For service freely given?
Now they who prospered by our aid
To action must be driven.
Then join, the women of our land
All eager for the fray—
With one and all and hand in hand,
And who shall bid us nay?
And shall they scorn our just demand,
And shall we voteless be?
To spread our cause, we shall not pause,
Till women shall be free.

46. The Monstrous Regiment of Women.

In a volume of poems (*Echoes of Strife*) that very much captures the sentiments of the Great War era, this poem is one of two that address the ways in which war impacted on women, the other being 'A Mother of Britain' (p. 27) that addresses the plight of mothers whose soldier sons had been lost in the war. While the 'Mother of Britain' would no doubt have been enfranchised in 1918, the younger women celebrated in 'The Monstrous Regiment' would have to wait until 1928. Rev. Walter Arnold Mursell of Coats Memorial Baptist Church (Paisley) published a number of poetry collections. In this poem Mursell evokes John Knox's famous treatise against female monarchs, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558) to make a point at odds with Knox's scepticism. Mursell describes the ways in which women had played a full role in the war effort (e.g. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, est. 1917) and suggests that they were capable of responsibilities far beyond those thought appropriate in pre-war years.

Catriona M.M. Macdonald

Time was when maiden fair
Braided her golden hair,
Wondered what clothes to wear
 Each night and morning;
Feared lest she wet her feet,
Trembled a mouse to meet,
Hardly dared cross the street,
 Strict was her warning.

Now in her uniform,
Whether 'tis cold or warm,
Braves she both sun and storm,
 True to her station;
Gallantly grips her task,
No time to dream or bask,
Proud of the chance to ask
 Work for the Nation.

Whate'er the Country lacks
Maidens she has in packs,
Neatly she spreads the Waacs
 All the Land over;
From Thames to Golden Gate
Woman has grasped her Fate,
Eager, alert, elate,
 Venus turned Rover.

1918.

Walter A. Mursell, in *Echoes of Strife* (Paisley: J & R Parlane, 1919), pp.25–26.

47. Should Women Get The Vote?

Little is known of Isabella Forrest, other than through family accounts (preserved and shared by a relative in Australia, Katrina Giebels) which say that she was a working woman and the mother of an illegitimate child. She appears to have published her poems in the Banffshire press from around the 1880s to the 1920s: her collection, *Islaside Musings* (1926), was sponsored by the *Banffshire Journal*. This is an unusual poem in that we know of relatively few poems about female suffrage – especially poems critical of the plans for female suffrage – written by working-class women. The 1918 Act did not extend the vote to every woman, and in her striking opening lines, Forrest demands that it should do. The poem is both implicitly conservative in its suggestion that ‘woman’s sphere’ lies in the home (possibly a dig at suffragettes and their public actions), and radical in hinting at the ‘quenchless flame’, threatening to burst out, that lies within the heart of the honest and independent working woman. Forrest also suggests that the poor are not content but deeply resentful at their treatment. In ‘They know God never meant it’ she argues, not unusually for working-class poetry, that discriminating against and mistreating the poor is anti-Christian. Her solution is not that working women themselves should join the suffragettes’ fight, however, but that working men should win votes for women through the ballot box. In doing so, they will also free themselves from ‘the chains that bind you.’

Kirstie Blair

Should women get the envied vote?

I stoutly answer, No—

Unless the privilege extend

To lofty and to low.

A woman's sphere should be her home,

No matter what her station,

Those who have not even self-control,

How could they help the nation?

The poor man's wife in humble home

Must labour, toil and spin,

Yet be denied her right to claim

What rank alone can win.

Too long, alas! the poor have felt

The power of rank and station,

Been made but tools by blundering fools,

A prey to degradation.

Within the humble toiler's breast

Tho' pressed at every turn,

There smoulders still a quenchless flame,

That fain would burst and burn.

Of honest, independent mind,

How deeply they resent it,
One thought alone can lead them on,
They know God never meant it.

The Laird can get his wife a vote,
Place land and state upon her,
The true give heed but to the deed
That's justified by honour.

Go forward then, ye working men,
Let no false promise bind you,
Cast bribes aside, by right abide,
And break the chains that bind you.

When casting lots for women's votes,
One point be sure you aim at:
If rank and state the honour get,
The poor man's wife can claim it.

Isabella Forrest, *Islaside Musings* (1926), pp.37–38.