

14/2/2
original in box file

"THE QUEER CARLE."

[Readers of the *Weekly Free Press* have been made aware that a new edition of Mr Carnie's "Waifs of Rhyme" is about to make its appearance. By the courtesy of the author we were favoured with an early proof of one of the new pieces contained in this edition. And our artist, who was privileged to see it, has been tempted into giving his ideas of the "Queer Carle" and his performances ocular embodiment so far.]



CARLE cam' to the auld Laird's door,
He played Scots springs mair than a score,
He liltit strains o' youth and yore,
And deftly changed the key :
His music breathed o' hills and howes,
Whaur Dee, the Don, and Ythan rows,
O' battle fields and fairy knowes
Seen far aff Benachie.

We set him by the ingle neuk—
The lads forgot dam-brod and book,
The lasses roon him a' did jouk,
He sang sae winningly :
He pettit Mary 'neath the chin,
Jean couldna wyve nor Lizzie spin,
Wee Ailie said 'twad be nae sin,
A kiss to him to gie.



The Laird, he heard the fiddle fine,
Thocht to himsel', but made nae sign,
Jist knacket's thooms oot-owre his wine,
And set his wig a-gee ;
Bell vowed she saw him tak' the flier,
Whan the Carle strak' up—"A wife wi' gear"—
In dum'-show pairtner'd wi' his cheir,
And danced richt merrily.

Neist week he lan'it at the Manse,
Sat cheek-for-chow wi' douce cook Nance,
Screwed up his pegs, and, as by chance,
Played " Whisky mak' s gweed tea " :
The Minister could write nae mair,
His dothers hearken'd on the stair,
Their mither froom'd yet fain wad share
The blythesome revelry.

Oor deen Precenter, Jamie Yule,
He couldna start his siner's' School—



Whane'er't got oot—The Carle is come !
The wabster left pirn, loom, and thrum,
The tailor tired owre 's steeks to bum,
The sooter raxed his knee ;
The blacksmith flang his hammer bye,
The herd loon hurriet hame his kye,
The vera' dogs wad crouchin' try,
To catch his kindly e'e.

By turns he crooned sae slow and sweet
O' frien' noo gane nae mair to meet,
That hearts in sympathy wad beat,
And tears come drappin' free ;
Then louder grew the swellin' chords—
The notes rang forth like clash o' swords—
" For Scotland onward ! looms and lords,
And quit ye valiantlie."

He laid aff ballads, auld and new,
Queer stories tauld, some fause some true,
And far owre fest the hairst nicht's flev
When the Carle was in his glec.
But here nor there lang wad he bide,
Few tried to bleck, nane daured to guide,
There was a something—wrath or pride—
Folk didna care to dree.

On Saturdays, at broadest meen,
Whan neighbour Dominies convene
To hae a rubber, weet their speen,
And swap theology,
The Carle, aye a welcome guest,
Appeared, unfaillin', in his best,
And took his place among the rest,
Whate'er the company.

On Kirk law, keen to cope wi' Pirie,
At reels, a match for Greig o' Garioch,
Even Bourtie's *Latin* he wad query
By Melvin's verity ;
Owre Darwin's scheme he cautioned truce ;
Held views now vexin' Dods and Bruce,
And leuch 'boot some scribe playin' the deuce
Wi' Eden's apple tree !

Gane, gane alas ! that hope-bright time
When hapless Smith was in his prime,
Then Tennyson, and homelier rhyme—
Soul-stirring psalmody—
Would warm and win, be sung and read
Till some young hearts thocht' what was said
Mair preceious far than daily bread :—
But that's a memory.

A bee in's bonnet? Mayhap twa,
We'll lat that flee stick to the wa',
The noblest wark has aye some flaw,—
Herein is mystery :
His faith displayed the Poet's plan,—
Wi' him a man was still a man,
Whate'er his station, creed or clan,
If stamped wi' honesty.

At length and last an Uncle deid,
Wha's gospel had through life been Greed ;
O' testament he left nae screed,
Nor wife, nor bairn had he :
Oor Carle, countin' next o' kin,
To acres rich and braid cam' in,
Ceased wanderin' ways and minstrel din,
For County dignity.

Nae hungry man need pass his door,
He giveth freely of his store,
'Twas only lent him—that, no more—
A sacred trust in fae

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He couldna start his Singin' School—
'Tween Kirk o' Rayne and Folla-Rule—

The Carle kent *Do-Re-Mi* !

He filled the lateran for a raith,
He chantit hymns and anthems baith
At sic a rate folk hadna' breath,

Nor time, the words to see.



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A sacred trust in fee.

Then when the sun sinks in the west,
And shadows wrap Buck-Cabrachi's crest,
The Carle, contented, dreams of rest,
In a grave by Benachie.

M. Carle