

The Ballads of George Thomas of Llandyssil 1786-1859

“Montgomeryshire’s best ballad writer was undoubtedly George Thomas. He lived through the exciting times of Montgomeryshire’s industrial boom, the introduction of the Poor Law and the Chartist arming and rioting. In mock heroic poetry he has recorded all the Montgomeryshire events from the adventures of the Yeomanry in Ireland in 1798 to the Mormon campaign of the Mid-Victorian era”, so wrote A. Stanley Davies.¹ More recently Patrick Thomas² wrote that his verse “is of considerable interest to the social historian, and much of it is also still extremely entertaining”. A biography of George Thomas appeared in Volume 97 (2009) of the Montgomeryshire Collections, P101-121. The following provides a more detailed examination of his 3 surviving published ballads and additional compositions:

“The Otter Hunt” c.1817 (which also contains “The death of Roman”)

“Welsh Flannel” c.1830

“History of the Chartists and the Bloodless Wars of Montgomeryshire” c.1840.

Address to John Glynne Mytton³ and his bride on their arrival in Llandyssil.

“Last Lines composed by George Thomas” in 1859.

The gravestone epitaph to Charles Dike of Mainstone, which is possibly also by him.

Two further ballads are lost; “The Death of Rowton” c.1829, “An eccentric character of Cefnycoed, Llandyssil”⁴ and “The Extinction of the Mormons” or “The Coming of the Mormons” written as a counterblast to the preaching and ‘missionary’ work of a number of Mormon ‘priests’ who at this period came into Montgomeryshire. Thomas seized the occasion with great zest to attack them in verse. He went for them horse, foot, and artillery, and where they went he followed to read his vitriolic poem...”⁵

“The Otter Hunt”

“The Otter Hunt” or “Sporting Disasters” and “The Death of Roman, A Famous Hound, Who fell dead in chasing a Hare”, which were published in one volume, describe a hunt owned by Mr John Lloyd 1771-1829 of The Court, Abermule.

Two editions survive:

¹ *The Ballads of Montgomeryshire – Life in the 18th Century*, 1938, P4.

² *The Anglo-Welsh Review* Vol 26 No 58, 1977, P102-9.

³ Son of Rev^d Devereux Glynne Mytton 1807-57, Rector of Llandyssil

⁴ *The Ballads of Montgomeryshire*, P5.

⁵ *Montgomery County Times* 26 December 1931 by “JMP”.

Printed by J Waidson of Welshpool, 1817. The 3 known copies are in the Bodleian⁶, the Newtown Public Library⁷ and in the National Library of Wales (NLW)⁸.

Printed and sold by J. Salter of Newtown, undated; but c.1832.⁹ It is certainly after 1829, as on the title page it described Roman as “The Property of the late John Lloyd, Esq., Court”. The one known copy is in the Stanford University Library, California.

The Waidson version contains a dedication to Charles Dike of Mainstone, whose mother was from Llandyssil. He died aged 45 on 17 March 1825 and was buried in the churchyard at Clun. The following epithet is on the gravestone, and is possibly by George Thomas:

Joyous his birth; wealth o’er his cradle shone,
Gen’rous he prov’d, far was his bounty known;
Men, horses, hounds were feasted at his Hall,
There strangers found a welcome, bed and stall;
Quick distant idlers answered to his Horn,
And all was gladness in the Sportsman’s morn.

But Evening came, and colder blew the gale,
Means, overdone, had now begun to fail;
His wine was finished, and he ceas’d to brew,
And fickle friends now hid them from his view.
Unknown, neglected, pin’d this man of worth,
Death his best friend, his resting place the Earth.

The Salter version, appears to be a more accurate text, and is reproduced below, with 3 exceptions (see below).

DEDICATION.

To Mr. Charles Dike,

Sir,

When I had last the pleasure of seeing
you, you kindly condescended to become the foster
parent of the following production, which was
then in embryo; and which I feared to break
cover with from the thickets of obscurity
fearing to be hunted down by the keen-nosed and
deep-mouthed hounds of criticism. The terrors

⁶ Unbound, inscribed “Roger Charles Blakeway” (presumably of Wootton Hall, Shropshire).

⁷ Unbound, presumably the copy mentioned in the *Catalogue of ...the Welshpool Free Public Library, 1888*.

⁸ Presented to the author by Dr J. D. K. Lloyd in 1977.

⁹ “The History of Printing in Montgomeryshire” by J. Iorwerth Davies, *Montgomeryshire Collections* 70 (1982) P73.

of this remorseless pack have hurried to the flames
many trifles of my fondest nurture, which might
not have offended the most reflecting moralist.
I have now ventured to unkennel, and should I
be tally-ho'd by the voice of scrutiny, I humbly
beg my pursuers to consider that I have never
walked beside the luxuriant streams of Cam or Isis;
my only school was the commercial traveller's room,
and the uneven and trying world the ground on
which I have quested for experience.

Offering the following humble production to
your notice, intended for your amusement, as a
remembrance of that gay and gallant occasion
which gave it birth,

I remain, Sir,
With the greatest esteem and respect,
Yours,
GEO. THOMAS.

THE
OTTER HUNT;

OR,

Sporting Disasters,

A COMIC TALE

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE DEATH OF ROMAN,

A WELL KNOWN HOUND

The Property of the late John Lloyd, Esq. Court,

That fell Dead when Hunting a Hare.

By George Thomas.

“ May the tale which good humour has harmlessly penn'd,
“ Not the poor, nor the rich, nor the titled offend,
“ No mortal I mean to insult or abuse:
“ I seek but in writing my friends to amuse;
“ For their kindness I tender all gratitude due,
“ And reader I hope that I've not displeas'd you.”

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NEWTOWN
Printed and Sold by J. Salter

THE
OTTER HUNT:
OR,
SPORTING DISASTERS.

SOME sport on the land, and some sport on the water, 1
The tale that I tell of is hunting the Otter, 2
An amphibious beast that on fishes does prey, 3
Each night seeking plunder, and hides in the day. 4
As the owl from her covert a mouse-hunting fled, 5
Her screams 'woke the huntsman who rose from his bed, 6
Adieu bade his wife, saying, "it's time to be going, 7
"For day-light appears, and I hear the cock crowing," 8
She reply'd "John, 'tis dark, and the owlet you hear, 9
"For the cock has not crow'd, nor does day-light appear; 10
"Sure your passion for hunting despises all bounds, 11
"When you love not your wife half so well as the hounds. 12
Said the huntsman "old wench stop thy rattle I say, 13
"For I like thee some times well enough in a way; 14
"But never yet lov'd parents, children or woman. 15
"Like the Radnorshire hound the famous old Roman" 16
As he spoke, to the kennel he straight took his way, 17
Where, caressing the hounds he remain'd till 'twas day; 18
When his noise rous'd the lords of the hall and the hamlet, 19
And landlords and tenants set off to the Camlet, 20
Each firmly resolving to find and to slaughter 21
The wily, the ravenous fish-killing otter. 22
Like an army of lancers the hunters appear, 23

For each otter-hunter did carry a spear; 24
 The gay and the ragged together did meet, 25
 And some came on horseback and some on their feet; 26
 There were lawyers and doctors, and some titled sirs, 27
 Hounds, shepherds' dogs, pointers, and mastiffs and curs. 28
 The hounds were named Minister, Topper and Trueman, 29
 Harlot, Lady, and Gamester, and Regent, and Blueman, 30
 Together with Damon, and Angel, and Ranter, 31
 And Fiddler, and Harper, and Luter, and Chanter, 32
 And Rockwood, and Ringwood, and Thunder, and Jewel, 33
 And Riot, and Rally, and Glory, and Cruel, 34
 And Trojan, and Spartan, and Tidings, and Tatler, 35
 And Roman, and Grecian, and Bellman, and Rattler. 36
 From a pack so harmonious, so gallant and fine, 37
 There was a music expected both rare and divine. 38
 Pious soul-mending parsons in sackcloth there came, 39
 Both to join in the chace and take tithe of the game; 40
 And the blacksmith for mirth and for hunting inclin'd, 41
 Left his bellows and hammer and pincers behind; 42
 And the carpenter scorning at home to remain, 43
 Did aside throw his axe and his saw and his plane; 44
 And the grocer thought hearing old Ringwood's deep chop, 45
 Would be far more delightful than minding his shop; 46
 And the lime-man he vow'd that to hear the pack chime, 47
 Would be better than burning or selling of lime; 48
 And the wheelwright away to the otter hunt flew, 49
 Disdaining his felloes to shave or to hew; 50
 And the joys of the chace made the maltster forget 51
 To give the exiseman a notice to wet. 52
 In the midst of the hunters the taylor appears, 53
 With his bag full of cabbage, his sleeve-board and shears, 54
 And the sexton who puts men to bed with a spade, 55
 In the midst of his work left the grave-digging trade, 56
 And in search of the hounds to the Camlet he sped, 57
 Declaring the dead might go bury their dead; 58
 And an Irishman came in a trowsers of blue, 59
 So big that the hounds in full cry might run through; 60
 May the genius of war grant this cossack-breech'd wight, 61
 May never be forced to seek safety in flight, 62
 Or his death he may meet in a manner more rare, 63
 Than Prince Absalom did, who was hung by the hair; 64
 For in forcing his way through the briar and stubs, 65
 He may hang by his breeches and so feed the grubs. 66
 One that groaning lay sick of lumbago and gout, 67
 And had long kept his bed and declin'd rising out, 68
 For in terrific shape the blue devils assail'd him, 69

Death grinn'd in his face and his kinsmen bewail'd him, 70
 Made his will, and bequeath'd when his bones were interr'd, 71
 To his sweetheart his lap-dog, his tom cat and bird, 72
 At his door, "come away" loud the huntsman did bawl, 73
 And frightened grim death, the blue devils and all. 74
 Up the sick man arose to chace with delight, 75
 And he hunted the day through, and drank all the night; 76
 And when with good liquor his noddle was heated, 77
 He told the parson and sexton he'd cheated; 78
 And the fees they'd have charg'd for enturfing him in, 79
 As banks were unsafe he invested in gin. 80
 He that hunted the hounds was call'd Pepper-away, 81
 He his name did acquire in a fisticuff fray, 82
 Pepper's stature was tall and his dark visage thin, 83
 And his nose did bend downwards and upwards his chin, 84
 His long hair uncurl'd and of sable its hue, 85
 And his beard seem'd a shoe-brush for long it had grew. 86
 With his voice hoarse from shouting, his eyes wild and keen, 87
 In a rimless round cap was old Pepper now seen, 88
 And a gay scarlet jacket too Pepper did wear, 89
 Such as yeoman put on when they beggars would scare. 90
 To behold this keen sportsman the village boys stole, 91
 For some thought him a Turk, or a Jew, or a Pole; 92
 Others thought (from the length of his beard and his lance) 93
 Him a Cossack returned from the conquest of France; 94
 Still of all British sportsmen old Pepper's the best, 95
 Since the days of Tom Moody whose bones are at rest. 96
 Down the precipice steep through the fen or the brake, 97
 Neck or nothing brave Pepper will gallantly take, 98
 Deepest rivers he'll swim and o'er fences he'll fly, 99
 By the music impell'd of the hounds in full cry. 100
 Pepper's eyes brightly blaze and stern age quits his face, 101
 When exulting he sings the delights of the chase. 102
 If his wife and his children were laid on a bier, 103
 And he mourning behind could the merry pack hear, 104
 "Hark away" he would cry, and be off like the wind, 105
 And old nick may take those who stay lagging behind. 106
 To whip forward the hounds came a little lame fisher, 107
 To his rival the otter no very well-wisher, 108
 His shirt fell his waistcoat and waistband between, 109
 And like a Scotch petticoat round him was seen, 110
 And a cravat once white around his neck ti'd, 111
 Which now with the juice of tobacco was di'd. 112
 That flow'd from the quid of pigtail that he chew'd; 113
 And his chin and his 'kerchief and waistcoat bestrew'd. 114
 He had orders received to gaze firm on the brook, 115

Should the otter be rous'd to see which way he took, 116
For the centinel longest on duty will stay, 117
Whose legs are unable to bear him away. 118
A descendant of Anac, a huge auctioneer, 119
Who a license takes out to tell lies by the year, 120
Exclaim'd, as his pad by the brook side he trots, 121
"Have at him, he's here for here's kennels in lots, 122
"An old guinea I'll bet to a modern half crown, 123
"If the otter's put up he'll soon be knock'd down" 124
But the otter he prov'd for the giant too knowing, 125
And forth from his kennel declin'd to be going, 126
At a water rat's den there some puppies did bay, 127
And their treacherous tongues deceiv'd Pepper-away, 128
"Hark forward, hark! hark boys!" enraptur'd he cries, 129
"Hark forward to Glory! odds curse your old eyes, 130
"Yoix, unkennel him boys, and if I come near him, 131
"By Nimrod I swear that I'll through the guts spear him." 132
Pepper hung down his head when he found himself wrong, 133
And instead of hark, hark, "get away" was his song; 134
He now said he "could hunt hares or foxes on land, 135
"But those sly water cats he did not understand." 136
Persevering and keen did the gallant pack try, 137
But the scent of an otter they never came nigh; 138
Huntsmen, horses and hounds all by hunger oppress'd, 139
Call'd at Marton to eat, and to drink and to rest; 140
When the village they entered destruction begun, 141
For they empty'd the cellar and drank down the sun, 142
And to starve out the natives each method was taken, 143
For they ate all the bread and the cheese and the bacon, 144
A more hungry, more thirsty, or more jolly crew, 145
No hunting or racing together e'er drew, 146
When their heads were grown mellow with Marton's good ale, 147
Then around went the jest and the song and the tale. 148
A squire that in snuff and in grey hounds delighted, 149
The limeman to course for a wager invited, 150
He asserted his dogs could all others outvie, 151
Which the heart of the limeman did burn to deny, 152
Blazing hot he said his dogs could "fly he'd declare it, 153
"And his faithful old servant was willing to swear it." 154
A gay Scotch linen draper that chanc'd to be there, 155
That from John o'Groats came or the devil knows where, 156
Said "in Inverness town all the people fed pigs, 157
"With nectarines, peaches and raisins and figs; 158
"That Scotland for valor and learning and science, 159
"And climate could set, the whole world at defiance." 160
An old sportsman reply'd, he "could wrestle or fight, 161

“But in balderdash books he had ta’en no delight, 162
 “He a hare could espy, or a fox he could trace, 163
 “Or knock down a woodcock, or join in the chace; 164
 “But latin and learning should always despise, 165
 “For the one was all nonsense, the other all lies. 166
 “There was dog latin lingo he’d heard people say, 167
 “But for hounds the best language was, hark! gone away! 168
 “And if plenty existed the Scotch side of the Tweed, 169
 “He wonder’d why Scotchmen came southward to feed, 170
 “And like asses in England toil under a pack, 171
 “But to Scotland in glory refuse to go back.” 172
 When the barrels were empti’d, and finish’d the meat, 173
 The hunters commenced their disastrous retreat, 174
 As the maltster returning did lead the advance, 175
 He got lam’d in the leg by some aukward mischance, 176
 And the court of Exchequer humanely thought fit, 177
 To threaten to fine him or send him a writ; 178
 And the limeman too daring did nigh meet his fate, 179
 As his old horse and he made a leap at a gate, 180
 Horse and rider fell down and severe was the shock, 181
 For they lit’ on a pavement as hard as a rock. 182
 Towards home limp’d the limeman his bones to get cur’d, 183
 And he’ll ne’er leap again till his neck is insur’d, 184
 And the smith must in pain his fortunes bewail, 185
 For he’s lam’d in the shoulder and can’t drive a nail. 186
 Honest barebones the Butcher beside the highway, 187
 Saw a tinker and wife both engaged in a fray; 188
 The good woman call’d “rogue” and a thousand names more, 189
 And the tinker he kick’d her, and called her a “whore.” 190
 Murder! murder! she scream’d in so piteous a tone, 191
 As would even have melted an adamant stone. 192
 The brave butcher rush’d forward the fair one to aid 193
 And ungrateful his kindness by her was repaid: 194
 She said, “Barebones, thou scoundrel, what is it to thee, 195
 “If my husband and self did by chance disagree.” 196
 With her talons expanded at Barebones she fled; 197
 From the wound of each talon the butcher’s cheek, bled. 198
 “Damn you madam,” said he, “I’d surely indict you 199
 “But I’m a brave man so turn out and I’ll fight you.” 200
 When the brave son of slaughter had ended his speech, 201
 The black tinker did give him a kick on the breech; 202
 And as follows he spoke in a voice load as thunder, 203
 “Those the priest ti’d together let none put asunder.” 204
 The butcher sneak’d off saying, “a couple so civil 205
 “Had surely been ti’d by some priest of the devil;” 206
 And he’ll doubtless remember the rest of his life, 207

The keen talons of Charlotte the black tinker's wife. 208
 An old silver-hair'd sportsman o'erloaded with grog, 209
 Was will-o'-th'-wisp led in the midst of a bog, 210
 Which he thought was his bed-room so drew off his clothes, 211
 And then laid himself down in the mud to repose; 212
 Where he slept till his limbs were grown stiff with the cramp, 213
 And awaking cri'd "wife the bed feels very damp." 214
 But what pencil, what pen shall his feelings pourtray, 215
 When he found not in bed but in mud he did lay. 216
 Nearly perish'd with cold and besmear'd with the dirt, 217
 That had stuck to his carcase, and stuck to his shirt, 218
 He to put on his clothing arose from the mire, 219
 And in anguish exclaim'd "a misfortune most dire. 220
 "O my breeches are lost! heavens where shall I hide me! 221
 "For my neighbours and schoolboys will mock and deride me!" 222
 As is ever the case, he that hideth can find, 223
 So he grop'd in the mud where his head had reclin'd, 224
 And beneath his cold bolster his clothes did discover, 225
 Daub'd inside and outside, and drenched all over. 226
 He now dress'd him, curs'd hunting if such were its joys, 227
 And went home the back way just to cheat all the boys. 228
 After many good biddings the huge auctioneer, 229
 Was sold and knock'd down by the fumes of strong beer; 230
 And his brother who sought approbation to gain, 231
 In trying to leap over, leap'd into a drain. 232
 And the bed of the saddler was novel and hard, 233
 On a grave-stone he slept in a village church-yard, 234
 As for hunting his sire went towards his abode, 235
 In the midst of a wasp's nest he carelessly rode; 236
 The wasps fled at his steed and most dreadfully stung him, 237
 Vain the old man cri'd "wo," Dobbin kick'd till he flung him. 238
 Dobbin gallop'd off home, and the streets did resound 239
 With the news that the old man in Camlet was drown'd. 240
 And a little fat fellow of taxes assessor, 241
 Something like Sir John Falstaff, but shorter and lesser, 242
 Had set off in the morn when he rose from his sleep, 243
 To hunt for the otter that ravag'd the deep, 244
 His height was four feet, and his breadth something wider, 245
 And in shape he resembl'd a hogshead of cider; 246
 His legs being short, as a hedge he clim'd o'er, 247
 Some thorns held him fast as his breeches were tore, 248
 As beneath his black coat his shirt peep'd through the hole 249
 He appear'd like a sweep that a flour sack had stole, 250
 And hid it behind him for fear of detection, 251
 But still it peep'd out as if courting inspection. 252
 The chace it being o'er and the day at an end, 253

He sent to the tailor his breeches to mend,	254
He paraded the streets and protested and swore,	255
That the teeth of the otter his garment had tore.	256
“I slew him,” said he, “and more feats have I done,	257
“Single-handed I vanquish’d a village nam’d Clun.”	258
Said a wag, “tis but seldom it cometh to pass,	259
“That there dies an exiseman, assessor, or ass,	260
“Or the teeth of the otter had ended your peeping,	261
“And have plac’d you along with your forefathers sleeping.”	262
It was late when the parson his dwelling did reach,	263
So he hired a clerical proxy to preach;	264
His proxy got ready, and look’d like, when mounted,	265
To Gilpin whose journey in song is recounted:	266
Save that Gilpin rode fast, and the proxy rode slow,	267
For Gilpin’s horse went whether John would or no;	268
And that Gilpin a bottle on each side him bore,	269
Which were slung on a belt that around him he wore,	270
And the steed was well corn’d that plac’d Gilpin in danger,	271
Whilst the horse of the priest saw none in the manger,	272
But to imitate Gilpin this clerical prig,	273
Wore a handsome cock’d hat and a cloak and a wig;	274
When the temple he reach’d he took wonderful pains,	275
His sermon to drive in his auditors’ brains,	276
And a jolly good fellow whose name I’ll not tell,	277
Swore the deputy parson preach’d “devilishly well.”	278
Now the otter hunt’s o’er and each found home their way,	279
They vow’d never more from their dwellings to stray,	280
But from hence stay at home their callings to mind,	281
Nor again seek otters or wild geese to find.	282
May the tale which good humour has harmlessly penn’d,	283
Not the poor, nor the rich, nor the titled offend,	284
No mortal I mean to insult or abuse;	285
I seek but in writing my friends to amuse;	286
For their kindness I tender all gratitude due,	287
And reader, I hope that I’ve not displeased you.	288

The Salter version has:

Line 136 – But those sly water rats he did not understand.

Line 190 – And the tinker he kick’d her, and called her a “w__e.”

Line 202 – The black tinker than gave him a kick on the breech;

Line 20 – The Camlet or Camlad, a stream that rises near Bishop’s Castle, and enters the Severn at Forden, said to be the only stream with its source England which flows into Wales.

Line 107 – “To whip forward the hounds came a little lame fisher...”:

QUERIES – A NEWTOWN PISCATOR. – In the *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine* for July, 1830, Vol. 2, p. 386, the following death is recorded – “Mr. Henry Williams, the *Isaac Walton* of Newtown, Montgomeryshire.” Was Williams in any way remarkable? The fact of his death being recorded in the *Cam. Quar.* does not prove it, because from the number of nobodies whose deaths are announced one would be led to suppose that the obituary was a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. TAFFY.¹⁰

REPLIES – A NEWTOWN PISCATOR (Jan 30, 1878). – Henry Williams, whose death was announced in the *Cam. Quar. Mag* for 1830, was a well-known character in the district, though not, I should have thought, a man of sufficient mark to figure, even when dead – a time when men’s virtues are often discovered for the first time – in a quarterly serial. Williams figured in a local poem called *The Otter Hunt*, by George Thomas... The poem was printed by Mr. Jackson Salter, of Newtown, who... when he read the above passages to the hero of it, Williams, before he had finished, exclaimed, rather forcibly “Why, he means me!” S. J¹¹

The Death of Roman

A FAMOUS HOUND,

Who fell dead in chasing a Hare.

OLD Roman is dead, the brave Radnorshire hound,	1
A better-bred dog never hunted the ground,	2
When Autumn appear'd, and the corn fields were shorn,	3
The morn was proclaim'd by the heart-cheering horn,	4
Then no hound was like Roman, so eager and gay,	5
For dearly he lov'd the glad call “come away,”	6
But no more shall the horn call old Roman the brave,	7
For the earth is his bed, and his kennel the grave.	8
Whene'er Roman quested his game he soon found,	9
Though it swam in the water or ran on the ground,	10
Sly Reynard in vain climb'd the mountains so steep,	11
Or the otter for safety div'd down in the deep;	12
The speed of the hare against Roman was vain,	13
For when Roman hunted his foes must be slain,	14
But no more shall the horn call Roman the brave,	15
For the earth is his bed, and the kennel his grave.	16
The strings of the harp nor the nightingale's song,	17
Could vie with the music of the old Roman's tongue,	18

¹⁰ *By-Gones – Relating to Wales and the Border Counties*, 1878-9, P7.

¹¹ *Bye-Gones*, 1878-9, P40.

Nor could the proud steed though well trained for the race, 19
 Match the speed that old Roman display'd in the chase, 20
 And when he gave tongue to him each hound would fly, 21
 For well the pack knew that he ne'er told a lie; 22
 But no more shall the pack hark to Roman the brave, 23
 For the earth is his bed, and the kennel his grave. 24

One morning a hare in the woodlands was spi'd, 25
 With rapture the joyful tantara! was cri'd, 26
 As old Roman in glory the gallant pack led, 27
 He fell on the turf that now pillows his head, 28
 And the grass on the mead that was verdant before, 29
 With crimson was stain'd by the brave Roman's gore, 30
 For the stout heart had burst of old Roman the brave, 31
 Now the earth is his bed, and the kennel his grave. 32

The sweet tongue of Roman for ever is mute, 33
 Which was loud as the horn, and as soft as the flute, 34
 And dim are the eyes that once vivid did glow, 35
 And crimson the skin that was black as the snow. 36
 The huntsman stood weeping, and hung down his head, 37
 When he saw that the spirit of Roman was fled, 38
 And the hands that had often fed Roman the brave, 39
 In the meads of *Brynderwin* now dug Roman's grave. 40

May we my good friends, when the last bugle sounds, 41
 To call us away both from horses and hounds, 42
 Be spotless as Roman, and fearless to die, 43
 And to injure our neighbours have ne'er told a lie; 44
 As long as we live we'll to friendship incline, 45
 And discord we'll drown in the juice of the vine, 46
 And drink in remembrance of Roman the brave, 47
 And be mellow the turf that lies over his grave. 48

Line 37 – “The huntsman” who “stood weeping, and hung down his head” was John Bywater.¹²

Line 40 – *Brynderwin* or *Brynderwen* (165954), near Abermule; the site of the kennels.

“The Death of Roman” is reproduced in “A collected history of the communities of Llandyssil, Abermule & Llanmerewig.” Abermule: Llandyssil Community Council, 1999.

“Welsh Flannel”

Both surviving copies of “Welsh Flannel” are in the NLW and are from the second edition

¹² “A History of the Parish of Llanmerewig” by R. Riggins and B. E. Jones *Montgomeryshire Collections* 35 (1910) P103.

published by Joseph Salter of Newtown in 1830. A sixth edition is known (see below) and there is also a reference to a Welsh translation.¹³

WELSH FLANNEL,

A

RHYME.

BY GEORGE THOMAS,
AUTHOR OF "THE OTTER HUNT,"
AND OTHER POETIC SCRAPS,

SECOND EDITION.



PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

By J. Salter, Newtown.

WELSH FLANNEL, &c.

WHERE the Welsh hills aspire to meet the skies,	1
The wilds of Nature greet the pilgrim's eyes;	2
Down the cleft rock the foaming torrent pours,	3
And the deep dell re-echos as it roars,	4
Delighted man beholds the timid sheep	5
Climb the tall cliffs that overhang the deep,	6
Or gaily frolic o'er the mountain green,	7
Where daisies spring to grace the lovely scene;	8
Blithe soars the lark to greet the orb of day,	9
At heav'ns high portal chants his mellow lay.	10

¹³ *The Ballads of Montgomeryshire*, P5.

The peaceful shepherd takes his distant round, 11
 Sees his flock safe, then sleeps upon the ground, 12
 The faithful dog his master's step attends, 13
 At strangers barks, bids welcome to his friends. 14
 The sleeping shepherd little dreams or knows 15
 The wealth these hills on careful man bestows: 16
 Their silver streams machinery impel, 17
 Enriching vales when foaming torrents swell; 18
 With *Severn's* flood the new canal now feeds, 19
 And this the merchant and the farmer speeds: 20
 Cherish'd with lime rich crops are waving o'er 21
 Extensive fields that sterile were before, 22
 And fair *Sabrina* finds a double way 23
 To roll her waters to the mighty sea. 24
 Her antient course flows to *Bristolian* tides, 25
 And the new branch to meet the *Mersey* glides. 26
 When od'rous roses blossom on the thorn 27
 The beating Flocks are driven to be shorn, 28
 Round goes the song, the jest, and merry tale, 29
 And care is drown'd in mugs of amber ale. 30
 Soon all the magic pow'r of music feel, 31
 The lasses dance, and lads begin to reel; 32
 The swain admires his nymph, the nymph her swain, 33
 And pleasure mingles with the shepherd's gain. 34
 Kings who command, and subjects who obey, 35
 Brought nothing here, nor aught can take away. 36
 Man in all stations, either young or old, 37
 By the poor sheep is shelter'd from the cold; 38
 Heav'n kindly teaches man the fleece to shear, 39
 And to the "lamb hath tempered the air." 40
 To *Newtown* mart the fleece is brought for sale, 41
 And now begins the burden of my tale: 42
 The harp had slept when commerce bless'd the vales, 43
 And *Newtown* rose the busy *Leeds* of *Wales*. 44
 Where cattle fed and meadows once were green, 45
 Wide streets are form'd, and swarms of people seen, 46
 Indust'rous artists, seeming all to thrive, 47
 All useful bees in the commercial hive; 48
 Each in his station useful as the great, 49
 Who, troubled guide the gilded wheels of state. 50
 Oft with their wares the freighted vessel sails, 51
 And brings *Columbia's* wealth to peaceful *Wales*. 52
 First in his place, with keen attentive eyes, 53
 To part the fleece the patient sorter plies; 54
 The picker next makes clean each mossy lock, 55
 The pitch cuts off that mark'd the shepherd's flock; 56

Soon thro' the willow's fangs the fleece is sent, 57
 Here oil'd and toz'd in countless pieces rent: 58
 Next thro' the scribbler's teeth must pass the whole, 59
 And then the carder forms the perfect roll; 60
 The piecer then exerts his infant skill 61
 To join the rolls, and feed the slubbing bill; 62
 The rolls half twisted by the slubber's art, 63
 The skilful spinner next performs his part. 64
 He little thinks, while round each spindle plays, 65
 How soon his threads would compass earth and seas; 66
 Nor does he think amidst the busy crowd, 67
 Those self-same threads perchance may form his shroud. 68
 The winder next in order does appear, 69
 And then the warper forms the lengthen'd beer; 70
 The warp in loom, and strengthen'd well with size, 71
 Quick thro' its folds the weaver's shuttle flies. 72
 The Flannel wove, the motes are pluck'd away, 73
 And then 'tis cleans'd with soap and fuller's clay; 74
 Now wash'd perchance in the same silver tide 75
 The harmless flock contented fed beside. 76
 Fair seems the web, the work of toiling man, 77
 As the rich plumes that deck the snowy swan. 78
 Welsh Flannel far does all the rest excel, 79
 It's downy-soft, without offensive smell. 80
 All others do a grating feel disclose, 81
 And sulph'rous scent, offensive to the nose. 82
 When wash'd, the merits of the whole are known, 83
 "*Hur* rivals shrink, but *Shenkin* stands *hur* own." 84
 Its use and cheapness all who wear it know; 85
 The sick-man's friend, none but the doctor's foe. 86
 As goblins fly the sight of blushing morn, 87
 So flies disease where grateful Flannel's worn. 88
 Soon as the feeble babe the light beholds, 89
 Its tender limbs its nurse in Flannel folds. 90
 As the hen's wings give vigor to her young, 91
 So Flannel makes the growing infant strong. 92
 The fair displays the best and truest taste 93
 Who Flannel wears around her slender waist. 94
 It soon allays gout's agonizing pain; 95
 The quinsy checks, and cures the blacken'd sprain. 96
 Oft has consumption yielded to its pow'r, 97
 And joy return'd where sorrow dwelt before. 98
 Where'er 'tis worn weak palsy hangs her head, 99
 And shiv'ring ague far from thence is fled. 100
 The victim of intemperate disease, 101
 Its kindness seeks to renovate his days. 102

Those who in tepid baths their bodies lave,	103
Or those who frolic in the colder wave.	104
Both their wash'd forms in downy Flannel fold,	105
The one it warms, the other keeps from cold.	106
In distant climes its sterling worth is known,	107
Both in the torrid and the frigid zone.	108
Where the sun's heat does sweaty drops distil,	109
This mild absorbent keeps out icy chill.	110
Or where the bear roams o'er the frozen sea,	111
And sombre night usurps the place of day,	112
In ice becalm'd where meagre famine dwells,	113
And nought is heard save monsters' horrid yells,	114
The hardy tar in Flannel wraps his form,	115
And braves the pelting of the polar storm.	116
The soldier tir'd who sleeps in tented field,	117
'Gainst midnight vapors seeks a woollen shield.	118
Flannel its pow'r with healing med'cine joins	119
To drive lumbago from the toper's loins.	120
Man owes a double debt to Flannel white,	121
His vest by day, his blanket warm by night.	122
The prop of life in each succeeding stage;	123
The nurse of youth, and comforter of age;	124
His first best garb when hurri'd from the womb,	125
And his last robe, to shroud him in the tomb.	126
He that had purchas'd thousands, little thought,	127
The purpose of the latest piece he bought:	128
Blooming in health, and eager seeking gold,	129
His glowing eyes glanc'd quick o'er ev'ry fold;	130
The thoughtful muse in sorrow seeks to tell,	131
His choice was luckless, for he chose too well:	132
Death sudden call'd, and quick the solemn bell,	133
With awful sound rung loud his parting knell.	134
The feeling hand, the tongue that oft approv'd,	135
And keen the eye that o'er the Flannel rov'd,	136
Are robb'd of speech, pulsation, and of sight,	137
And doom'd to slumber thro' eternal night.	138
Touch'd by the threads he fondly sought to buy,	139
Yet cannot feel that those same threads are nigh;	140
One garment only wears he in the grave,	141
Who nations clad beyond the distant wave;	142
And few indeed choose with their vital breath	143
The robe that decks them in the house of death.	144
"Peace to his manes" who <i>Cambria's</i> thousands fed,	145
He brought her woollens, and she mourns him dead.	146
Long may the sails of commerce be unfurl'd	147
And Flannel wafted to the distant world.	148

Commerce to <i>Britain</i> is like gentle rain	149
From heaven dropping on the rip'ning grain.	150
Commerce assist the lab'ring plowman's toil,	151
Her children buy the produce of the soil:	152
Where honest industry erects her throne,	153
Chains seldom clank, and felons seldom groan.	154
And where her sons can earn their daily bread,	155
Rebellion pines and factions hides her head.	156
Long may the staple trade fell war survive,	157
And long its friends in ev'ry climate thrive.	158
May he that guards us erring mortals all,	159
Who not unheeded "sees a sparrow fall,"	160
Direct the wheel, and guide the weaver's blows,	161
And <i>Cambria</i> flourish whilst her <i>Severn</i> flows.	162

FINIS

Line 127. "He that had purchas'd thousands, little thought," "He" is the late Richard Scott, Esq; of Betton, near Shrewsbury. [Printed in the original].

In a souvenir brochure¹⁴ produced for the Opening of the Royal Welsh Warehouse at Newtown on 3 October 1879, Pryce Jones quoted lines 19-20 and 41-53, followed by:

"So sings the poet Laureate of the Welsh Flannel trade, and he so blends the useful with the ornamental in his "poem" that it goes against our hearts not to reproduce it. Until we read it we must confess to a very hazy notion of how flannel was manufactured, but here all the secrets of the trade are revealed, and, moreover, we are told far more than even we knew as to what flannel, and especially Welsh flannel was good for!"

Followed by lines 79-106.

A further, Royal Welsh Warehouse brochure¹⁵, quoted 12 lines from the sixth edition (from "Taught by her pow'r Dear Cambria's sons essay'd" to "And brings Australia's wealth to peaceful Wales", see below) and lines 121-6, 147-8 and 153-6.

At least one copy of the sixth edition survived until relatively recently, published by Salter and Sons, in 1835¹⁶, and was apparently reprinted by Thomas Cliff in 1852.¹⁷ An extract from this sixth edition appeared in *Montgomeryshire Collections* Vol 5 (1872) P 42-3 in the "Parochial History of Llanidloes" and was also reproduced in "The Industrial Revolution in North Wales"

¹⁴ NLW ref Powysland Club (1982 deposit) 5/54. See also *Mail Order Retailing in Britain: A Business and Social History* by R. Coopey, S. O'Connell and D. Porter, 2005, P140 and P168 Note 3, which quotes "the busy Leeds of Wales" and "bees in the commercial hive" from Royal Welsh Warehouse advertising material.

¹⁵ *Booklet, thanking customers for their patronage*, 1887, Powys Archives ref M/D/PJ/W/4. I am grateful to Mark Lucas of the National Wool Museum for drawing this document to my attention.

¹⁶ "Articles presented... to the Powys-Land Museum and Library" *Montgomeryshire Collections* Vol 13 (1880) P XXXIII.

¹⁷ *The Ballads of Montgomeryshire*, 1938, P46.

by A. H. Dodd, Third Edition, 1971. Further variations are quoted on the title page of “An Outline of the Newtown Woollen Industry” by M. Richards, 1971, and in his “A History of Newtown”, 2001, P51, and reproduced in Montgomeryshire Collections Vol 64 (1976) P114 “A Case Study of Newtown Montgomeryshire” by L. Williams. These variations are also confirmed and added to by the extract reproduced in the Montgomery County Times, 26 December 1931.

The following combines the quotations identified above, partially recreating the sixth edition:

Second Edition	Sixth Edition
<p>To Newtown mart the fleece is brought for sale, And now begins the burden of my tale: The harp had slept when commerce bless'd the vales,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And Newtown rose the busy Leeds of Wales. Where cattle fed and meadows once were green, Wide streets are form'd, and swarms of people seen, Indust'rous artists, seeming all to thrive, All useful bees in the commercial hive; Each in his station useful as the great, Who, troubled guide the gilded wheels of state. Oft with their wares the freighted vessel sails, And brings Columbia's wealth to peaceful Wales.</p>	<p>To trading marts is brought for sale, And now begins the burden of my tale. Whilst the harp slept. The Sun of Commerce rose To bless the arts, and banish Cambria's woes Taught by her pow'r Dear Cambria's sons essay'd To drive the wheel, and start the flannel trade. Check'd in their course, the streams that idly ran To gold were turned by this prolific plan: The blessings spread adown the grassy vales,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And Newtown rose the busy Leeds of Wales. Where cattle fed and meadows once were green, Wide streets are form'd, and crowds of people seen, Industrious artists, seeming all to thrive, All stirring bees in the commercial hive;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Oft with her wares the freighted vessel sails, And brings Australia's wealth to peaceful Wales.</p>

In the “Parochial History of Llanidloes” version “Taught by her pow'r Dear Cambria's sons essay'd” appears as “Taught by her power, Llanidloes' sons essay'd”. The same wording appears in “The Severn valley” by J. Randall, 1862 and in “When Newtown was the ‘busy Leeds of Wales’”, by E. V. Jones, 1971. The 4 lines starting from “Whilst the harp slept”, also appear in “Llanidloes a History” by Dr D. Stephenson, 2010, P38.

Lines 79-84 and 121-6 appear in “Montgomeryshire Worthies” by Richard Williams, second edition, 1894, P297 and in “Epitaph for an old windmill” by L. Payne, which appeared in Country Quest 30/1 (1989), P5. Lines 121-6 are also quoted in “The Textiles of Wales by A. Sutton, 1987, P69, which states they are reproduced “from a leaflet issued by Pryce Jones's Powysland Mills, Welshpool” which appeared in 1878.

Part of the same section appears in a “History and Description of the County of Salop” by Charles Hulbert, 1837, P54 and reproduced in “Bye-Gones”¹⁸, with minor differences which are probably merely transcription errors:

¹⁸ *Bye-Gones*, 1876-7, P164, 6 December 1876.

The harp had slept when commerce bless'd the vales,
 And Newtown rose the busy Leeds of Wales.
 Where cattle fed and meadows once were green,
 Wide streets are form'd, and swarms of people seen,
 Indust'rous artists, seeming all to thrive,
 All useful bees in the commercial hive;

The harp had slept, and commerce bless'd the vales,
 When Newtown rose, the busy Leeds of Wales.
 Where cattle grazed and meadows once were green,
 Fair streets are formed, and crowds of people seen,
 Industrious mortals seeming all to thrive,
 All useful bees in the commercial hive.

In addition to the lines discussed above, “The Industrial Revolution in North Wales” on P229 quotes lines 53-64 and 69-78.

A further variation appears in “A Brief History of The Ancient Church and Town, The Pryces of Newtown Hall, and The Present Church and Modern Town of Newtown, Montgomeryshire” by B Bennett Rowlands, Newtown, 1914, with, on P140, five additional lines:

A few years hence and famed Newtown
 Was but a village small,
 With here and there a mud-built cot,
 Most mean and comical.
 The tide of commerce roll'd down her grassy vales,
 And *Newtown* rose the busy *Leeds* of *Wales*. 44

“History of the Chartists and the Bloodless Wars of Montgomeryshire”

There are 3 surviving copies: 2 in the NLW¹⁹ and 1 in Cardiff University Library. The ballad of 900 lines is divided into 5 parts; The History of Toolly Loolly, The Battle of Abermule, The Battle of Heniarth, The Battle of Caersws, The Battles of Newtown and Llanidloes

“Toolly Loolly” was almost certainly Isaac Jones who “was Trumpet Major in the Ancient British Light Dragoons on Sir Wms. Wynn's troop in Ireland”.²⁰

Abermule. Dates vary for this incident.²¹ “At the end of June... the Montgomeryshire Yeomanry... were for the first time embodied to help the civil power... Throughout the night of June 30 and again of July 10, the Yeomanry remained on duty”²² or “the 12th of July [1819] a call was made on the Regiment to suppress a riot at Abermule”.²³

¹⁹ One was presented to the Powysland Museum and Library by S. Salter. NLW ref PowInd82 Box17.

²⁰ See the Welshpool 1800 baptism entry for Jane Jones, MGS Welshpool Baptisms MR/C/11, 2003, P84, No 1962. See also TNA ref WO 13/4017. Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn raised a troop officially called ‘the ancient British Light Dragoons’, but also known as ‘Wynn's Lambs’.

²¹ Quarter Session records document disturbances in Newtown on 7 & 10 Jul and at Llanllwchaiarn (Abermule) on 12 Jul 1819. Powys Archives – Mont_QS_1810-1819 Refs 1819T112-3.

²² *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*, P401.

²³ *The Historical Records of the Yeomanry and Volunteers of Montgomeryshire 1803-1908* by Lieut-Col R. W. Williams Wynn, 1909, and *Montgomeryshire Regiments...* by B. Owen, 2000, P76.

“The courage of Welsh sergeant Webb”. In *Bye-Gones*²⁴ DH stated that the gentleman satirised, and who asked that if there was no fish he might have herrings, settled in Oswestry, and was a well-known character in the town. Minshall, the Printer, burlesqued his lamentable English in a famous letter addressed to “Griffy Mawr, Squire”.²⁵

Heniarth. In 1837 officials went to Llanfair Caereinion to introduce the new Poor Law and were met by a hostile mob. The meeting had to be abandoned and, when it was reconvened, the Yeomanry were called out to wait at Heniarth in close support.²⁶ There was a standoff between the chartists and yeomanry, but the miller who owned the prospective battlefield sent over his servant with the message “Master says he won’t have no battle on his land, and you’re to go home!”²⁷

Caersws.²⁸ The “Battle” occurred on Christmas Day 1838.

“They preach’d New Harmony was heav’n”. “The community in Indiana built by German Rappists in 1815, and purchased by [Robert] Owen in 1823 as a site for putting into practice his *New View of Society*”.²⁹

The Battles of Newtown and Llanidloes.³⁰ In April 1839, following representations to the Home Secretary, three London policemen were sent to Llanidloes. They attempted to make some arrests, as a result the Trewythen Arms Hotel was stormed by a mob.

“To learn to the way to march and fight”. John Ingram of Llanllwchaiarn, was subsequently transported for “drilling the mob”.

“A burgess of a once fat borough”. Thomas Edmund Marsh 1803-61, ex-Mayor of Llanidloes.³¹

“The works of Hetherington and Brien”. Henry Hetherington 1792-1849 and James Bronterre O’Brien 1805-64, an Irish Chartist leader. Henry Hetherington addressed meetings in Llanidloes and Welshpool in 1839.³²

“And Vincent’s Western Vindicator”. Henry Vincent 1800-70, a leading Chartist, he established the *Western Vindicator*, based in Bath.³³

²⁴ *Bye-Gones*, 1876-7, P175-6, 10 January 1877

²⁵ Possibly William Webb 1771-1852, who served 1792-1816 in the Grenadier Guards, and was at the time of the 1841 census living in Bailey Street, Oswestry

²⁶ “Llanfair Caereinion in the early Nineteenth Century” by Charles H. Humphreys *Montgomeryshire Collections* 48 (1944) P149.

²⁷ “The Lloyds of Montgomery” by Dr J. D. K. Lloyd, *Montgomeryshire Collections* 49 (1945-6) P257 note.

²⁸ “The Newtown and Llanidloes Union Workhouse, 1837-47” by Brian Owen *Montgomeryshire Collections* 78 (1980) P120.

²⁹ *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*, P410 note.

³⁰ “Chartism in Mid-Wales” by Owen R. Ashton. *Montgomeryshire Collections* 62 (1971) P25-30

³¹ *Montgomeryshire in 1839* by E. R. Horsfall Turner, 1935.

³² “Chartism in Mid-Wales” by Owen R. Ashton *Montgomeryshire Collections* 62 (1971) P25-30.

³³ See www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/Vincent

“Found fire would not unite with Frost”. John Frost 1784-1877 a leader of the British Chartist movement in the Newport Rising.³⁴

“Babylon” “A cant Name for Llanidloes”. [Printed in the original].

“The helmet fell off yeoman Cart”. “Sergeant Major Cart”³⁵ ‘lost his Schacko & one of the scales from his shoulder’.³⁶

S. Baring-Gould in “A Book of North Wales”, 1903, on P284, quotes lines 159-67 and 407-10.

“The Industrial Revolution in North Wales”, on P396 quotes line 413, on P409 lines 447-50 and on P410-1 lines 471, 473-4, 659-60, 669-78 and 705-8.

M. Richards in “A History of Newtown” 2001, on P38, quotes lines 471, 473-4 and 705-8.

J. E. Samuel cited the *History of the Chartists* as evidence that Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn entered Llanidloes in 12 June 1839 with the Yeomanry.³⁷

“Address to J G Mytton and his bride”³⁸

On the approach of John Glynne Mytton, Esq. and his amiable bride to Llandyssil on Thursday 31st ult., the horses were taken from the carriage, which was drawn by the populace to the Rectory, when a band of music, with numerous flags bearing suitable mottos, followed by forty gentlemen and yeomen on horseback preceded by a noble ox drawn by four beautiful grey horses; then followed the children of the Sunday School, and hundreds of other pedestrians neatly dressed; besides thousands of spectators who came to share the festivities of the day. Having halted in front of the Rectory, Mr. Mytton was addressed as follows by Mr. G. Thomas, one of his parishioners: – “Reverend Sir, I am deputed by my neighbours to congratulate you on the happy event which has recently taken place in your family, namely, the marriage of Mr. John Glynne Mytton to the amiable and accomplished Miss Davies, a lady whose worth the surrounding country has borne corroborative testimony; happy are we, and thrice happy is he that has made so judicious a choice. Nature, Sir, has bound all her children together with a tie more strong than iron, and more precious than gold, that tie is sympathy, which prompts man to shed a tear for the misfortunes of his fellow-creature, and to rejoice in his well-doing; pitiable is the weakness of that being, be his situation in life what it may, who boastingly says he “cares for nobody.” All here are Conservatives who fear God and honour the King, and all that are put in authority under him; men who are willing to yield tribute where tribute is due; men wanting no visionary or speculative changes, and men who knew, before the schoolmaster came abroad, that tithes cannot become the property of the tenant. Our offerings should have been less humble had not Sir Robert Peel deprived us of the benefit of a paper currency, and then extracted from us

³⁴ *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*, P410.

³⁵ “A notable musician, Richard Carte” by H. Llewelyn Howell *Montgomeryshire Collections* 35 (1910) P238-45.

³⁶ *Montgomeryshire Collections* 97 (2009) P150-1 quoting from NLW Powis MSS 79.

³⁷ *Weekly Mail* 28 June 1890, following up an article (31 August 1889) and a letter (8 February 1890).

³⁸ *North Wales Chronicle* 16 February 1836. John Glynne Mytton married Charlotte Davies, at Forden, on 8 December 1835.

heavy contributions in gold to build a splendid prison at Montgomery, which we trust will crumble to a shapeless ruin ere one Llandyssil man shall be cooped within its walls. We thank heaven, that whilst the demon of spoliation has been exerting his baneful efforts to desolate the fairest portions of the kingdom, the standards of crime or rebellion have not reared their guilty heads in this our peaceful hamlet; the burglar, the assassin, and the coward incendiary dwell not here; our doors may remain unlocked, and our linen on the hedges, without fearing the plunderer's approach; our peasantry are patient, industrious, and well-employed; but there are mightier reasons than these for their good conduct, they have mentally marched half a century in advance of the peasantry of most English counties, and know their duty to God and their neighbour; the watchword of Christianity is peace on earth and good will towards men, and today the rich and poor meet together, and the Lord is the keeper of them all. In conclusion, Sir, we say as the boys will to-morrow morning: –

“We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy new year;
A pocket full of money,
And a cellar full of beer.”

To which Mr. Mytton replied... The following glee was then introduced: –

“Here's health to the bride that Glynne Mytton has won,
Whose beauty all other surpasses;
No worthier creature dwells under the sun—
All hail to the fairest of lasses.
Here's a health to the fair, and a health to the pair,
Come merily fill up the glasses;
And, when he comes, here's a health to the heir—
Come neighbours see quick the toast passes.”

The song, the jest, and the merry tale went round
til chanticleer proclaimed the coming day, and his
clarion was responded to in the words of Scotia's Bard—

“The cock may cra, the day may da,
But still we'll taste the barley bra;”

And not until the hour “the ploughman drives his
sturdy team afield,” did sons of harmony separate.

“Last Lines”

George Thomas died on 29 August 1859. A printed copy of his “Last Lines” was reproduced in Montgomeryshire Collections Vol 97 (2009), P120-1.

Frazer Thomas

12 April 2017