

gether for about twenty minutes or half an hour, and then the young man went out; and another young man,—he who had procured the contract lines and the whisky,—took his place. The interview in this second case, however, was much shorter than the first; and a very few minutes served to despatch the business of the third young man; and then the minister, coming to the doorway, looked first at the old women and then at me, as if mentally determining our respective claims to priority; and mine at length prevailing,—I know not on what occult principle,—I was beckoned in. I presented my letter of introduction, which was graciously read; and though the nature of the business did strike me as ludicrously out of keeping with the place, and it did cost me some little trouble to suppress at one time a burst of laughter, that would, of course, have been prodigiously improper in the circumstances, I detailed to him in a few words my little plan, and handed him my copy of verses. He read them aloud with slow deliberation.

ODE TO THE NESS.

Child of the lake!* whose silvery gleam
 Cheers the rough desert, dark and lone,—
 A brown, deep, sullen, restless stream,
 With ceaseless speed thou hurriest on.
 And yet thy banks with flowers are gay;
 The sun laughs on thy ample breast;
 And o'er thy tides the zephyrs play,
 Though nought be thine of quiet rest.

Stream of the lake! to him who strays,
 Lonely, thy winding marge along,
 Not fraught with lore of other days,
 And yet not all unblest in song,—
 To him thou tell'st of busy men,
 Who madly waste their present day,
 Pursuing hopes, baseless as vain,
 While life, untasted, glides away.

* Loch Ness.