Jan 19, 2025

This is a translation of George Murray’s poem, “The Bonnie Howe o’ Rathen. This document is just to help understand some of the words, but it is much better when read in George’s language of Scots.

 The Pretty Basin (Lowland) of Rathen

The pretty basin of Rathen!

Sweet memories round you twist,

And tender recollections

Of the days of times long past,

Though far from you I wandered,

 To me you are indeed the same,

The pretty basin of Rathen!

 My own, the place where I was born!

How often when night brings the day to an end,

 And all is calm and still,

I ponder over the scenes of old

 Where memory loves to dwell,

I see the homely (plain) house with

 Its cozy two roomed cottage,

And I hear the small children chattering

 Round the old fireside.

Oh, could I make time stand still,

 And backward make it flow,

And be a boy once more again

 Of twenty years or so,

I’d crack my thumbs and shake my sides,

 I’d laugh and greet and sing,

And head back to Rathen,

 And the days of times long past.

But time makes many changes

 In 60 years and more,

And they’re all gone and left me

 I knew in days of long ago.

The old folk they’re both dead and gone,

 And all my friends and relations,

But I am still a wanderer here,

 Far, far away from home

 George Murray