



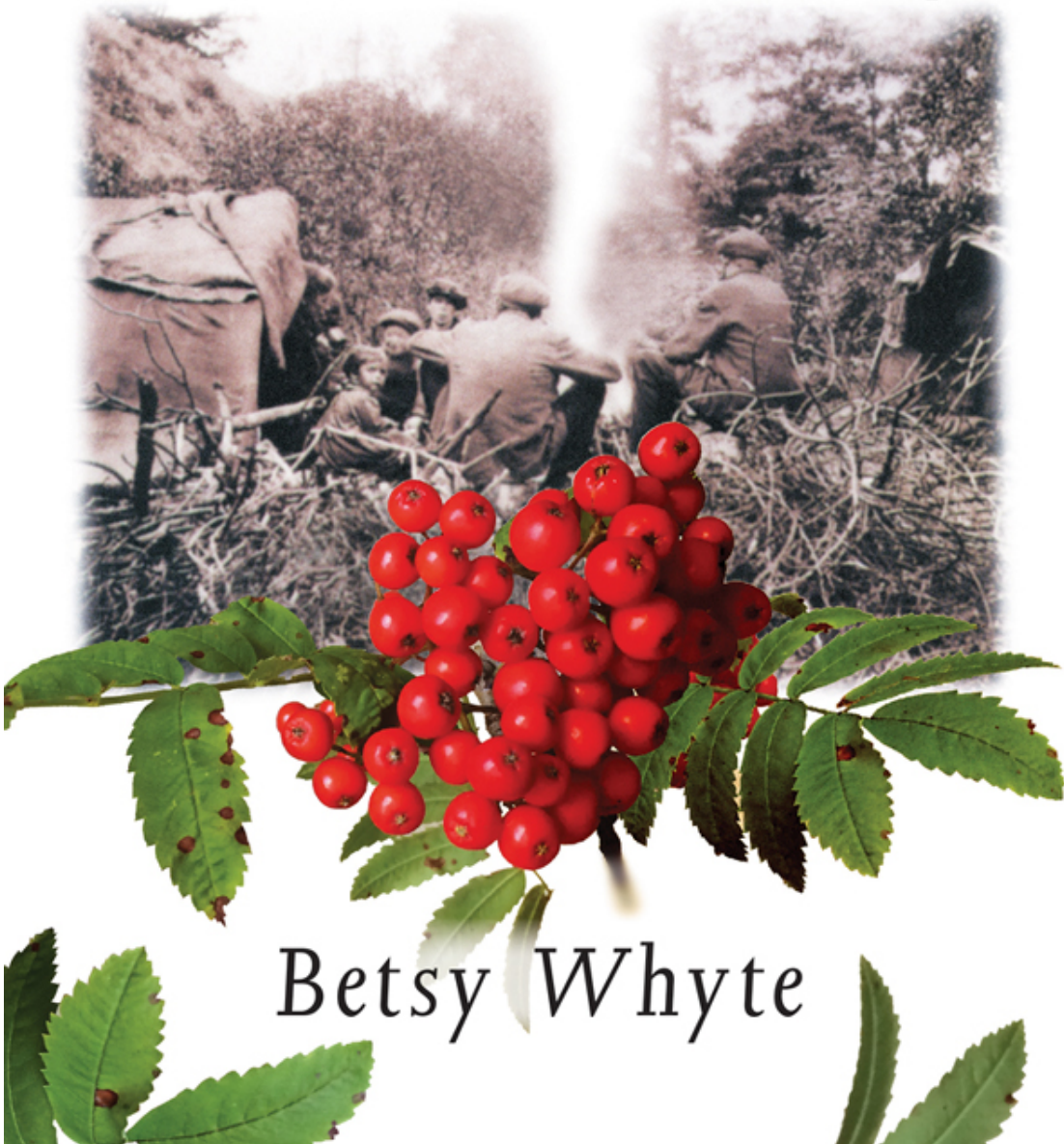
Red Rowans AND Wild Honey



Betsy Whyte



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Editors' Note

It is twenty-one years since the publication of Betsy's account of her days as a traveller child. That book, *The Yellow on the Broom*, was hailed as a minor classic. Almost immediately she was being asked to continue her story, for it had ended when she was still a young teenager travelling the byways of Angus and Perthshire with her mother and sister.

In fact Betsy had already begun a sequel (which is now included in this second edition)—but progress was impeded by a sudden transformation of her lifestyle. The modest housewife and grandmother, eking out a State pension in a council flat in Montrose, found herself a television and radio personality, travelling England as well as Scotland. In addition to recording traditional songs and tales for the School of Scottish Studies, she gave talks to literary and artistic societies. In classrooms and at folk festivals, she mesmerised children and grown-ups alike with old tales of magic and wonder.

She remained somewhat bemused by her status as a minor celebrity and—although she adapted extraordinary well to this new kind of travelling—she was happy to return home among her family. But a traveller home is no haven for a writer: hers was a 'ceilidh hoose', where friends and neighbours dropped in for a 'crack' at any time of the day and night.

A friendly local librarian helped by providing a little room where she could write in peace—until she grew

restless for the open air. Then Betsy returned to her more relaxing, if backbreaking, occupations such as collecting whelks along the rocky Angus shores or working for farmers during the weeding and harvesting seasons.

Parts of her manuscript appeared intermittently over the next five or six years until—encouraged by a writer's bursary from the Scottish Arts Council—Betsy felt it was nearly finished. She had taken her story up to the end of World War Two, telling with vivid detail and candour of her days of courtship of her mother's struggle to cope with the problems of being a widow and mother of four. Like many other traveller women, she toiled to keep the family together while their menfolk were away fighting Hitler's armies.

But Betsy found great difficulty in rounding off this book. There seemed no natural way to end it, for she already had a sequel in mind which would bring her story up to date. Only parts of the sequel were put down on paper but we were given other fascinating glimpses of what was to follow and tried repeatedly to persuade her to continue without delay.

But—even when *Red Rowans and Wild Honey* was completed to her satisfaction—she remained adamant. 'I have not been writing. It is just a traveller superstition, not to count chickens ... If a publisher is found then I will write night and day. It is all in my mind. I will only have to set it down.'

Sadly, it was not to be. Three days after she wrote those words, still before she knew that this book would be published, she died of a heart attack, leaving behind an assortment of brief jottings and just 9000 words of the continuation she had already composed. We now include this brief sequel since it moves her life-tale on another

decade, giving glimpses of more summers in the country and winters housed-up. By 1955, however, it was clear that the days of freedom for travellers to take the road each summer had become rarer and a few years later Betsy's family moved more or less permanently into Montrose itself, where we first met here.

Over the years we worked with her, we were constantly amazed by the talent—and the humility—of this remarkable woman. She herself recognised only one 'gift': that of second sight, inherited from her mother and to Betsy it was disturbing. But she was indeed a gifted, natural, writer: or rather a storyteller turned writer. All her written material was actually composed in her mind. Her laboriously penned sheets bore little trace of amendments and corrections, the signs of a seasoned writer's second thoughts. Read aloud by one familiar with it, her narrative flowed effortlessly without pause: the natural breaks were there—but unsignalled. Formal punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, seemed necessary to help the reader to 'listen' as Betsy intended. But that was all: we call ourselves 'editors' for lack of a better term: in fact we were mainly exhorters, advisers, sounding boards . . .

Constantly she questioned the value of her writing: 'Will people really want to read about that?' Yet she was not only recording a past way of life and the attitudes it shaped. In writing of her own life with all its joys and sorrows, its 'red rowans and wild honey', she told of life itself in a way no contrived novel can. Because these events really happened, because 'civilised' people really did so behave towards those they regarded as their inferiors . . . her story is singularly poignant, thought-provoking, disturbing . . .

Perhaps because, despite the trials and tribulations, the
humour and the hope shines through?

Peter Cooke, Ian Gould

1



‘Do you hear me, lassie?’

‘Aye, Ma, what is it you’re saying?’

‘That’s three times I have spoken to you and got no answer. There’s more for you to be doing than sitting dreaming. Go with Katie along to the stable and yoke the pony. The poor animal will be foundered if it doesn’t get out for a run. Anyway, there’s nothing for it to eat. You can cut some grass for it.’

There was a note of irritation in Mother’s voice. She was worried. My father had died some six weeks earlier, leaving her with three girls. Katie, the eldest, was twenty. I was fifteen, then there was Lexy, eleven.

Mother had been living in a state of confused despair since Father’s death, quite unable to put her mind to anything much. At first she had wandered through the house singing coronachs to her aching heart, with tears running down her cheeks. This doleful singing had such a depressing effect on all the rest of us that one day I burst out, ‘For God’s sake, Ma, stop that or you are going to put an end to all of our days.’ She did stop it and tried very hard to keep her heart up.

There was neither bite nor sup in the house, so when I answered Mother it was to say, ‘I could do with something

to eat myself, as well as the horse. Give me your basket with your wee bits of stock and Katie and I will try to raise the wind.' 'Stock' was what we called whatever we were selling—in this case such things as needles, pins and bootlaces.

Ricky, my little Border collie, had been lying quietly under a chair but he soon stirred himself when he knew that I was going out. There was a pleading look in his brown eyes as he gently pawed me. Kneeling down and fondling him, I told him that he couldn't come with me. The look in his eyes as I opened the door was heart-rending. So I ran back to him and said, 'I will be back for you in about twenty minutes. You be a good wee doggie and I'll take you with me.'

Then, going over to where Mother was sitting, I put my face up close to hers and said, 'Do you think there is any difference in my freckles? Are they going away?' Mother had told me to try rubbing the freckles with a slice of raw potato every night. I had been doing this for a fortnight now, and I was sure they were fading.

This was too much for Katie, who had been impatiently waiting for me. 'Is that all you can think about?' she said. 'Folk's insides are croaking out of them with hunger and all you can think about is getting rid of freckles!'

'Can you two lassies not look at each other without having an argument? You will both live peaceably in less room yet.' Looking at Mother's pale face, and her eyes without any light in them, made a profound wave of pity almost rend me. She scanned my face too, and I knew that she was not examining my freckles but reading all the secret emotions of my heart. I also knew that she didn't have a smoke and that she could suffer the pangs of hunger but having no tobacco really downed her.

I ran ben the room and took a gold bracelet out of a drawer. I had gotten it from a farmer's daughter up at Glenisla. Coming back to Mother I said, 'Here, Ma. Take that up to the jeweller and he will surely give you the price of tobacco for it—and a bite for us.'

'That's the bracelet that you got from Isla. I couldn't take it and sell it. I know how much you like it.' Mother weighed the heavy eighteen-carat bracelet in her open palm as she spoke. 'You are never likely to get anything so nice as this again, Betsy.'

'I ken, Ma, but the only reason that I am so fond of it is because of the way I got it. It is only a thing and cannot feel the craving for a smoke, nor hunger. I am much too camaschacht to wear it, anyway. It is better for us to get something for it than it is for me to wear it, or to just have it lying in a drawer.'

2



I had picked up Mother's square basket and was going towards the door as I spoke. ' 'Bye, Ma. Lexy is playing pea-alleys out the back.'

Katie, who had been waiting for me at the gate, gave me a look that would have sunk the *Queen Mary* when I came out. But she said nothing—for a wonder.

Prince the pony nickered when we entered the stable—which was only about three hundred yards from the house. Katie had been handling horses since she was a child but I, for some odd reason, never felt quite at ease with them. Nor did horses seem to be quite at ease with me. My very presence seemed to disturb them in some way. They could tolerate me in the float or cart—and eventually settled down, after a few nervous quivers, if I got on their backs—but it was another story if I approached them face on. Then they would really show their uneasiness.

So I was a bit bothered when Katie said, 'Will you put on the brecham whilst I get the rest of the harness?' She had led Prince out of the loose box.

The brecham was hanging on a nail, I lifted it off and approached the pony. He was a canny, gentle beast but as I neared him he backed a little and showed me the whites of his eyes. I just knew that he would rear if I got any closer

to him. 'You had better put the brecham on,' I shouted to Katie.

'All right, bag of laziness. You that wants to do nothing but sit and read, or look down at your own face in the looking-glass all day. I'll put it on myself.'

She was beside me now and picking up the brecham from where I had thrown it down. 'You are as white as a sheet,' she said and began to laugh mockingly. 'I think you are feared of the pony.' Katie knew nothing of this thing between me and horses. 'You who are always the brave one! Oh aye, you are a brave body!'

Her mocking words and laughter were too much for me. I snatched the brecham from her, and boldly approached Prince with it raised towards his head. He nickered, backed and reared—and I had to dodge his hoofs as he came down again.

'See! He is the one that is feared, Carrots, not me.' I called Katie 'Carrots' because she had red hair.

'You must have been doing something to the animal or he wouldn't be like that with you, Peesie.'

Katie called me Peesie ('Peewit') because every spring, when the fields were ploughed ready for potato planting, I would walk up and down the drills collecting peewits' eggs. I would break one and if it was fresh I would take the rest. If they were gogged I easily knew, and just left them. At the same time I felt sorry for the birds but, as the potatoes had to be covered with soil ploughed over them, those eggs would probably have been crushed into the earth anyway. So I thought that we were better to eat them than to have that happen to them. Nice and tasty they were, too.

I have often seen ploughmen, when they were happing the potatoes, being alerted by the frantic screeching of the parent birds. They would stop their horses and search in

front of the ploughs for baby birds or gogged eggs. This was no easy task as the peesie builds no nest and just lays her eggs on top of the earth. They are so well camouflaged that you could pass them a dozen times and not see them. However, if a ploughman did find them, he would gently lift the eggs or newly hatched birds and carry them over to where the plough had already been—hoping that the parents would find them.

I think it is about time that I went back to Katie and Prince at the stable. Katie's last remark had stung me. I would never ill-use a dumb animal, but I was reluctant to explain things to her. I was very reluctant to accept the fact that horses disliked me, so I did not want to talk about it.

Katie soon had the horse yoked—with very little help from me. 'Should we go out the Montrose road?' Katie asked.

'There is always a lot of traffic and people walking on that road,' I answered her. 'We could be better going down the Muddy Brae and over the bridge—but stop at the house first. I'm taking Ricky with me.'

Ricky bounded toward me when I entered the house. 'Oh, did you think that I had forgotten about you, my wee jugal? Come on, jump into this box—and not a sound out of you, mind!' I placed an empty cardboard box on the floor as I spoke and he leapt into it. Then I covered him up with an old jacket.

Mother, who was combing and pleating Lexy's long hair, said, 'That animal is wiser than many a human being.' Ricky's intelligence was almost astounding. He seemed to be aware of all that went on around him and most of what was said of him he seemed to understand. We lived in a council house and were not allowed to keep a dog or any

other animal. Ricky always hid himself when anyone came into the house.

I carried out the box with Ricky in it and placed it on the float, then Katie and I set off. When we had crossed the old bridge and left the town, I lifted the coat off the top of Ricky. He scrambled out of the box and started to demonstrate his delighted pleasure as only a dog can. He loved sitting on the cart or running alongside and jumping in again when he got tired.

Katie had started the horse to trot and I soon got lost in the beauty of the scenery. This road ran for about three miles along the wooded bank of the river South Esk and mossy green dykes ran along each side of it. A brilliance of wild flowers patterned the grass and couthy masses of honeysuckle caressed some of the trees.

Katie pulled up when we came to a wide verge covered with lush grass. 'I'll bet you never took the huke with you,' she said.

'I can use the scythe,' I told her. Daddy's scythe was fixed under the float where he had made a place for it in case of accident. I could see that even the look of the scythe blade made Katie nervous, so I reassured her saying, 'I've cut with a scythe hundreds of times.' I hadn't really, but I could use it. Father had showed me—after I had insisted. My two brothers had died in childhood, so I tried to be like a son to him, helping him with almost everything he did.

The pony was already sampling the grass and Ricky had found a wandering toad which seemed to interest him a lot. As I grasped the two handles of the scythe I realised that Daddy's hands had been the last to hold them and waves of deep emotions pulsed through me. I sighed deeply.

Then I started to sing *The Boatie Rows*, keeping time with the scythe and with one eye on Ricky—lest he should get tired of the toad’s manoeuvres and come bounding into the scythe. Katie had finished the song with me then, jumping up onto the float, started to diddle *Paddy O’Rafferty* and to do an Irish clog dance with her feet rattling on the wooden float. She had learned this from some Irish potato workers who had been living in huts at a farm where we too were working. ‘Come on, Katie!’ I shouted in an Irish accent.

Just like that the pony decided to move on a bit, to better pastures—jerking the float as it did so and sending Katie sprawling across it. Her laughter assured me that she was unhurt so I too started to laugh and we kept on laughing for some minutes.

‘Aye, this is all right and right enough, but it’s not filling our bellies any. We’d better hurry up and get on the road.’ Katie had begun lifting the cut grass and piling it onto the float as she spoke, keeping well away from where I was using the scythe. ‘Could you do with a reeking jug of yellow tea and a pipe packed full of fine black tobacco?’ I asked her.

‘Shut up, Peesie, or I’ll hit you,’ she answered. Soon there was enough grass cut so I stopped and secured the scythe back into its place under the float, then helped Katie to lift the grass—just piling it loosely.

Ricky was sitting on top of the grass, panting. ‘Poor wee jugal, tired out chasing a yirdy. What like would you be chasing a mootyay?’ I crooned to him. He alerted when I mentioned ‘rabbit’, then tried to lick my face. Ricky knew a lot of words in cant, the secret language of the travelling people. I taught him as many as he should know, for it came in useful sometimes.

Jumping up on the float, we then drove on till we came to a row of cottar houses. Taking turn about, Katie and I went to all the houses—on and off the road for the next five miles—trying to sell something out of Mother's basket. But it was no go. Often people just did not have money, or anything else to spare, in those hard-up thirties.

So Katie turned the horse and we started to jog back along the road. We were a bit tired and very hungry. We were also gasping for a smoke, having acquired the habit at a very early age.

3



Passing an opening in the dyke at the side of the road, I asked Katie to stop. 'I'm going to have a rake in the midden down there,' I told her.

'The middens around here are well enough raked,' she answered.

The midden was a place where surrounding farmers dumped cartloads of rubbish. It was on the steep wooded bank leading down to the river, and much of the rubbish had rolled down, to end up against fallen or upright trees. It was also skirted with waist-high nettles, the most cantankerous nettles I had ever encountered. Already I could feel their venom in my legs. The stench of rotten potatoes and other vegetation nearly knocked me down, but I had seen four stone jam jars amongst them, and was determined to get them. In those days a penny would keep your electricity or your gas going all day, and those stone jars were worth a penny each.

I scrambled up the bank, to tell Katie. 'In the name of God, lassie, what are you doing? Oh me, me, the toich coming off you would gas a regiment of soldiers,' Katie greeted me, holding her nose.

'I just came up to tell you that I've found four jars and I'm going down to the burn to wash them.'

The burn was really the river South Esk. We called all rivers burns—big burns or wee burns, never rivers.

She was backing away from me, still holding her nose and repeating, 'What a toich!'

'You'll no say that there's a toich off the coppers I'll get for them, Carrots.' The pain of the nettle stings was more to blame for my stinging words than Katie's remarks. 'Come on, Ricky. Come away from that bool-nosed woman.'

Ricky readily obeyed and Katie shouted after me, 'Wash yourself too, Peesie, or you needn't come near me!'

I stood up past the knees in the river as I washed the jars, which were half full of glaur and were stinking.

Ricky was all but the tail into a rabbit hole, and seemed to be pulling and dragging something out. So I went to see what it was. 'What's that you've got, Ricky?' I could see that it was a sack. So I helped Ricky pull it out. It was very heavy and when I looked inside, my eyes met another pair of eyes. The dead eyes of a huge salmon. There were five big salmon inside the sack. The fish were quite fresh and must have been caught that morning.

Poachers, I thought. Well, I'm sorry, poachers, but you're going to be one salmon short when you return tonight. If daylight caught out poachers they often hid their catch and returned for it after darkness. Now, how to get the jars and the fish up the slippery bank?

I sat down and took off my stockings, and laced one through the salmon's gill. Then I tied the jars at intervals along the other stocking. The wet stockings tightened and held them quite securely.

I had meant to carry the jars slung around my neck and under my arm, but in my mind I could hear Mother's voice saying, 'Have you no more sense than that, lassie? If you slip and fall, those jam jars could break and pierce you. They could even be the cause of your death.' So I changed my mind and tied the other end of the stocking which was

on the salmon to its tail. Then I put my head and one arm through the ring so the fish was resting across my shoulders. You see, I needed a free hand to grasp branches of trees and roots of grass to help me up the slippery brae, and I had to drag the jars behind me with my right hand.

I heard Katie shout, 'Loo-ral!, loo-ral!' and I 'loo-ralled' back to her. I knew that she couldn't leave the pony, and also that she was fed up waiting for me.

Reaching the road I quickly off with the fish and pushed it under the grass on the float. The jars were a bit muddy, but at least they were no longer smelly. They, too, went under the grass.

Katie was a bit stunned at the sight of the salmon. 'Did you catch that?' she asked.

'Dinnae be stupid,' I told her.

Katie was really upset. 'We will be jailed if anyone sees that.' She said no more but her face was rather pale.

It was a warm day and I could feel the mud drying on my face. There was a horse trough at the side of the road about two miles from the town and, after the pony had taken a drink, I tried to clean myself with the water while Katie washed the basket. Katie had a comb in her pocket and I tidied my long hair.

'Give me a shot of your coat,' I asked Katie. 'The worms are eating the insides out of me. I am going down to that farm to ask for something to eat.' Covering my dirty dress with Katie's coat, I made sure all the stock was in the basket.

'I'll take you down,' Katie said, and turned the pony down into the farm road.

4



When we got to the farm the door was opened to me by a dark-haired, rosy-cheeked, sparkling-eyed servant maid. She's as healthy as a trout, I thought.

'It's nae often that we get ony o' you lads up here,' she exclaimed.

'Maun dae is a good master,' I answered.

'If it's siller you're seeking you're gaen tae be disappointed,' she told me. The dried mud on my dress and my tangled hair had let her know at once who I was, or rather what I was.

'The master and missus are away from home,' I stated, rather than asked.

'Aye, they are away tae the mart today.'

'What about these?' I asked her, holding up a box of pretty fancy garters. 'Your lad will love them.'

She blushed crimson exclaiming, 'Foo dae you ken I have a lad, and that the master and missus are away? Ye can read fortunes can't ye? Come on, read my fortune for me.'

'Well, I dinnae really,' I began, then desperation took over. 'I suppose I could,' I told her.

'Haud on a meenit!' she shouted, running into the house, and returned in a few minutes holding out a gold ring set with emeralds and pearls. 'You can hae this ring,' she said.

'Na, nae way will I take your ring,' I told her.

‘It winna fit me,’ she told me. ‘It belonged tae ma Granny.’

‘Na, na, I cannae eat a ring, lassie, I dinnae want it.’

‘But ye can sell it.’ I believe she would have given me the farmhouse on my back, she was so keen to get her fortune told.

‘Put that ring away,’ I told her, ‘and tell me what like a mistress you have?’

‘I hae a braw mistress, and master tae. They treat me like I was their ain.’

‘Then maybe she wouldn’t miss a puckle oatmeal or tatties and such like, and maybe three jam jars.’ I was determined to get the price of half an ounce of tobacco for Mother.

So we struck a bargain. My fortune telling delighted her, and she nearly filled a white flour bag which nearly all travelling people—women anyway—carried for this very purpose. ‘Now don’t give me anything that will be missed,’ I told her. At that time most farms kept big chests of tea, sacks of flour and oatmeal, also sugar. They also made their own butter and cheese and hung their own pork from the rafters to smoke. Eggs were plentiful, too, and that young servant girl was more than generous. However, I knew that she spoke the truth when she said that her mistress wouldn’t miss any of it.

I bade her goodbye and came away laden with the bag on my back, and Mother’s big square basket on my arm.

5



When I rounded the corner of the steading and came to the farm road I saw that a policeman was standing holding his cycle and talking to Katie. Hell, I thought, God pity him! Ricky was nowhere to be seen. I guessed that he would be under the grass on the float: he had been taught to hide from policemen. Anyway, Katie would have hidden him when she saw the policeman approach.

As I neared them Katie glanced my way, then said to the policeman 'OK, there she is now. I told you I was waiting for my sister. There I go saying "OK." We are all picking up that American slang from the talkies.'

The word 'slang' was the one I had been waiting for. In cant it means licence'. So I immediately knew that the policeman had been asking Katie if we had a licence. For a moment I almost panicked. We had no licence for peddling. We did not even have a dog's licence for Ricky. Then there was that salmon under the grass. If the policeman discovered it, then we would be in real trouble. I scanned his face, then relaxed a bit. His howlet eyes and sticking-out ears, the general look of his face, had told me that his intelligence was rather limited.

'Well well, then,' he said to me, 'and what have you got in the bag?' The maid had put the eatables into the flour

bag for me and I had it on my back with the basket on my arm.

‘Just some gather-me-goes,’ I answered him lightly.

‘What the hell are gather-me-goes?’ he asked. ‘Let’s have a look.’

Laying down the basket, I let the bag slip around my shoulder—still holding it, of course—and held it open for him.

‘What’s all this? Tatties, eggs, jam, bread....’ His head was almost into the bag and he lifted each article as he mentioned its name. ‘You don’t intend to be hungry anyway. Is this what you call gather-me-goes?’

‘Aye,’ I answered him, ‘we gather them as we go.’

‘Well, let’s see your licence now—and don’t try to tell me that you’ve left it at home. I will soon find out where you bide. There is not so much scouff for you lads now since they started to close down the camping sites. I was caught like that once before. One of your menfolk told me that his driving licence was at home where he was biding. I trailed away up to the Cattle Rake the next day, but the cottar folk told me that none of you lads had been there for weeks.’

When he had finished talking, I told him that I didn’t need a licence.

‘What do you mean, you don’t need a licence? Didn’t I catch you red-handed, coming away from a door with your basket and everything? You need a pedlar’s licence for that.’

‘Aye, you saw me coming away from a door but I wasn’t peddling. I was swapping, exchanging things for food. If you go and swap a book or anything, do you need a licence to do it? There is no such thing as a licence for swapping. Leastways if there is I’ve never heard about it.’

meal poke a meal bag, a bag for food
meek a quiet sound made by an infant or by a pet, to
mew or whine
midden a rubbish heap or dung heap; a term of abuse,
particularly to a woman
min man
mind, mind on to remember
miscaa' to miscall, to scold, to call names
moich foolish, mad
mony many
moo mouth
moose a house
mootyay a rabbit
muskin a mutchkin, a measure of liquid
na, nae no
nakens travellers
nane none
nash avree! get moving!
neeps turnips; *neep-tasted* tasting of turnips
nicker to whinny
o' of
ower over
oxter armpit
pea-alleys the game of hop-sotch
pech, peek to pant for breath
peeked-looking sickly-looking
pickle, puckle a small quantity, a few
plank! hide!
ploo a plough
ploops the police
plouter to potter about on trifling tasks
pluchie a ploughman
plukie-faced pimple-faced

plunk to pluck out
polis the police
prig to plead
puckle a small quantity, a few
puddock a frog
quean, queen, quine a girl
raise the wind to earn enough to survive
ranny a bold unruly person
rax to stretch, overstrain
reed a cattle pen
reel-rail helter-skelter
rin to run
ripe, rype to search
rive to tear apart, to eat ravenously
roon round
rowed wrapped up
rummle to shake
sair, sairly sore, sorely
sateen a linen or cotton cloth woven in such a way that it
has a gloss like satin
sax six
scaffie street sweeper
saffy, sciffy a maidservant, also a refuse collector
scald to cause grief or pain
scaldified behaving like scaldies, town-dwellers of the
lowest class. (*Scaldie* originally meant 'bare': bare of
feet, money, clothes)
scalpions roguish young men, eager to work off high
spirits by tormenting others
scarify to scrub all over very roughly
sconce to tease, especially in a way which belittles the
person
scoor, scoorin' to scatter, scattering

scouff, scouth freedom, sufficient space to romp and play
scranny thin, wizened
scrunted a scrunted tree is one that is still standing but is
decayed inside and covered with moss and lichens
scud to smack, a smack
scuddle to scurry or hasten, particularly in order to avoid
work or responsibilities
shanness! an exclamation meaning 'bad word', 'bad deed'
or 'bad situation' but it can be used in many different
ways
share sure
shern cow dung
shuch the private part of a woman
siller silver
skirlie seasoned fried oatmeal
skirling shrill screaming
sleekit sly, cunning
smeeked smelling of, and cheery with, drink
sneck a latch
snooled made to feel low and downtrodden
soo a heap of loose hay or straw
soaken to soak
sook to suck
souch, sough a murmur: of the sea, a river, the wind,
distant voices, birds' wings, for example
spall, spawl to spald, tear apart
speekit a spigot, a tap. Actually a speakit was a small
hole in a barrel with a stopper. Often country people had
to use water from a barrel which had a tap to turn on
the water, so in course of time a tap came to be known
as a speakit.
spey-wife a woman fortune-teller

spin-drift fierce hail or snow which seems to come from
all directions

spit a likeness

stall to stop, keep one's self-control

stane a stone

stirr to get someone excited, all worked up

stovies sliced potatoes steamed with fried onions

stooks sheaves of grain set up against each other to dry

sway a fire iron. It hung above the fire and had a hinge
which allowed it to be swung forward to remove a pot or
kettle. It could then be swung back over the fire or to
the side if not needed.

syne since

tail a loose woman

tak' to take; *tak' tent* take notice

tap to top, to cut the tops off turnips or sugar beet. The
tool used was called a *tapner*.

tappie a decoration made of straw for the top of grain
stacks

tatties potatoes

telt told

thocht thought

thon that one

thrang crowded, close together

thrawn obstinate

til to

toadied spoiled, fussed over

toich a smell

troosh to humble or frighten someone

troot a trout

tuggery fine clothes

twa two

umman body a woman