



Scottish Poets and Poetry

Alexander Anderson



Alexander Anderson (1845-1909), of Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire. Known as 'Surfaceman', he was the son of a quarryman. Anderson was a train driver and poet, self-taught in six languages, and described by one critic as 'the first navy poet'.

Anderson lived from 1845-1909 and was born in Scotland. He was influenced by poets [Dante Alighieri](#) and [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#).

Alexander Anderson, who generally wrote under the pseudonym "Surfaceman", was born in Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire, Scotland and became a *surfaceman* on the railway. He spent all his leisure in self-culture, he mastered the languages German, French, and Spanish sufficiently. His poeticness, which was somewhat limited in range but true, manifested itself,

and when he completed his first book, *Songs of Labour*, it appeared in 1873. Followed was *Two Angels* (1875) and *Songs of the Rail* (1878), then *Ballads and Sonnets* (1879).

In the following year, 1880, he was made assistant librarian in the University of Edinburgh, and then after an interval as secretary to the Philosophical Institution, then he returned as Chief Librarian to the University.

He was of a simple character in his life, and made many friends, including the Duke of Argyll, Carlyle, and Lord Houghton.

