THE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS:
INCLUDING
HIS LETTERS TO, CLARINDA, AND THE WHOLE OF
HIS SUPPRESSED POEMS:
WITH
AN ESSAY
ON HIS
LIFE, GENIUS, AND CHARACTER.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE Public is here presented, for the first time, with a complete Edition of the Works of ROBERT BURNS. The Editor, in the preparation and superintendence of the text has endeavoured to unite fullness with accuracy. He has consulted the original copies, and restored all those spirited and happy effusions; those Poems and Letters, so replete with irony and satire, with fire and tenderness, which the interested motives of Dr. Currie had consigned to oblivion. He has, moreover, drawn up an Essay on the Life, Genius, and Character of the Author, which will be found to contain a faithful record of the mournful vicissitudes of his fortune, and a defence of his memory against the malignity of hypocrisy and envy.
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THE FIRST VOLUME.

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ESSAY
ON THE
LIFE, GENIUS, AND CHARACTER
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

Justice has not hitherto been rendered either to the genius, the conduct, or the character of Burns. Born in a humble station in life, he suffered all the hardships and privations incident to a state of poverty. The highest efforts of his mind, in which the tide of intellectual greatness seemed to flow in deep and exhaustless channels, failed to soften the avarice of the rich, or to raise him above the prospect of perpetual toil. Like his native and lonely hills, he existed in solitary barrenness, subject to every blast, and exposed naked and bare to every tempest. The boldness, the loftiness of view, the towering of the spirit that was about him only laid him more open to the raging of the elements. No refreshing showers came to rest upon his head or to pour fertility into his bosom. He was
an elevated point round which the storm clung and gathered; a prominent rock condemned by Nature to endure the buffetings of the surge. Yet, amidst the bitter waters of indigence and sorrow, of drudgery and neglect, he bore himself loftily to the world. His soul was wrung but not subdued. He yielded; but it was to a hand that was irresistible. He fell like the oak of the forest. He was uprooted from his place, and stretched with all his branches on the earth.

His death, which extinguished in some bosoms all resentment, increased in others a hatred already furious, deadly, and inextinguishable. The grave afforded him no sanctuary. The obscurity of his birth was revived against him as a crime. His convivial habits, and his wit and humour, were perverted into habitual dissipation and impiety. His social talents were tortured into a neglect of every moral duty; his memory was loaded with the most odious imputations; and when malignity had apparently exhausted its venom, the halt and the lame charged him with cowardice, with attempting to commit murder, and afterwards suicide.

We shall not stop at present to inquire into the motives which produced calumnies so false and so atrocious. It is in the nature of some minds to envy what they cannot equal, and to endeavour to destroy what places them in a state of hopeless inferiority. We shall advert to them
when we enter into the consideration of his genius and character. Let us attend in the meantime to the mournful vicissitudes of his life, and the singular asperities of his fortune.

Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a small cottage near the banks of the Doon, about two miles from Ayr. The chief incidents of his life are related by himself in a letter to Dr. Moore. In this document, and in several passages of his correspondence, he speaks with great strength and animation. In order to do justice to his memory we shall copy his sentiments and his language.

"For some months past," says he, "I have been rambling over the country; but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, except in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble—I have, I say, like him, turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and, like him, too frequently
shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

"After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you that the poor Author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

"I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh, last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's Office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood;
gules, purpure, argent, &c. quite disowned me.

"My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, who rented lands of the noble Keiths of Marischal, and had the honour of sharing their fate. I do not use the word honour with any reference to political principles. Loyal and disloyal, I take to be merely relative terms, in that ancient and formidable court, known in this country by the name of Club-law, where the right is always with the strongest. But those who dare welcome ruin, and shake hands with infamy, for what they sincerely believe to be the cause of their God, or their king,
are, as Mark Antony says, in Shakespeare, of Brutus and Cassius, *honourable men*. I mention this circumstance, because it threw my father on the world at large.

"After many years' wanderings and sojournings he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood *men, their manners, and their ways*, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son."

"For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil: so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

"At those years I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiotic piety. I say *idiotic* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent
English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and participles.

"In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places: and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors.

"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was The Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,

How are thy servants blest, O Lord!

I particularly remember one half stanza, which was music to my boyish ear—

For though on dreadful whirls we hung High on the broken wave.

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school books.
"The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were The Life of Hannibal, and The History of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

"Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half-mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c. used, a few years afterwards, to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me which has not ceased to this hour.

"My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our catechism-definition of infinitude, 'without bounds or limits.' I formed several connexions with other younkers who possessed superior advantages, the youngling actors, who were busy in the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our gentry have a just sense of the im-
mense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were perhaps born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books. Among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the Munny Begum scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils.

"My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain*; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a fac-

* "Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr," says his brother Gilbert, "is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give, than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let, a few years ago, five pounds per annum lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and diseases."

"To the buffetings of misfortune, we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher-meat was a stranger in the house, while
tor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of *Twa Dogs*. My father was advanced in life when he married. I was the eldest of seven children; and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom from his lease in two years more; and to weather these two years we retreated our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman, for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert) who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thresh the corn. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction; but so did not I. My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

"This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little

all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm; for we had no hired servant, male or female.

"The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old (for he was now above fifty), broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances—these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine, sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life were in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards."
before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a bonie, sweet, sonsie lass. In short she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below.

"How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. You medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles.

"Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed
ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song, which was said to be composed by a small country laird’s son, on one of his father’s maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

"Thus with me began love and poetry, which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease; otherwise the affair would have been impracticable.

"For four years we lived comfortably here; but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years’ promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

"It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps
the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish. No *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from *Salmon's* and *Guthrie's* geographical grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with *Pope's Works*, some plays of *Shakespeare*, *Tull* and *Dickson on Agriculture*, *The Pantheon*, *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*, *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, *Justice's British Gardener's Directory*, *Bayle's Lectures*, *Allan Ramsay's Works*, *Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, and *Hervey's Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

"In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions. From that instance of disobedience in me he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years:"
I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence.

"The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt some early stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed upon me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune, was the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it. The last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance.

"Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy, or hypochondriacism, that made me fly from solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them.
"But far beyond all other impulses of my heart was un penchant d l'adorable moitié du genre humain. My heart was completely tender, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart.

"A country lad seldom carries on a love-adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and I dare say I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of Follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature. To
them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

"Another circumstance in my life, which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c. in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind.

"The contraband trade was at that time very successful; and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming filetite, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and cosines for a few days more; but, stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.

It was in vain to think of doing any more good
at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

"I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the compositions of most of my correspondents, flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

"My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure. Sterne and M'Kenzie, Tristram Shandy and The Man of Feeling, were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling
walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour.

"I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand. I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the cunning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet. None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except *Winter, a dirge*, the eldest of my printed pieces; *The Death of poor Mailie; John Barleycorn*; and songs first, second, and third. Song second *was the ebullition of that passion which ended the fore-mentioned school-business.

"My twenty-third year was to me an important æra. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My..................; and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new-year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes; and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

"I was obliged to give up this scheme. The clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption. To
crown my distresses, a belle fille, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy, being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—Depart from me, ye accursed!

"From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding that he is at this time master of a large West-Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

"His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm,
and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded. I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief; and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote *The Poet's Welcome*.

"My reading only increased while in this town, by two stray volumes of *Pamela*, and one of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with *Ferguson's Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour.

"When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense and every sober qualification he was far my superior.

"I entered on this farm with a firm resolution—*Come, go to, I will be wise!* I read farming books—I calculated crops—I attended markets.
—and in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man. But the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom; and I returned, like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

"I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetical offspring* that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them dramatis persona in my Holy Fair. I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause.

"Holy Willie's Prayer next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me, on another side, within point blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, The Lament. This was a

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* The Twa Herds.
most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality*. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother—in truth it was only nominally mine—and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica.

"But, before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power. I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever

*This distraction of mind arose from his connexion with Jean Armour, afterwards Mrs. Burns. She "was a great favourite of her father's," says his brother Gilbert. "The intimation of a private marriage was the first suggestion he received of her real situation. He was in the greatest distress, and fainted away. The marriage did not appear to him to make the matter any better. A husband in Jamaica appeared to him and to his wife little better than none, and an effectual bar to any other prospects of a settlement in life that their daughter might have. They therefore expressed a wish to her, that the written papers which respected the marriage should be cancelled, and thus the marriage rendered void. In her melancholy state she felt the deepest remorse at having brought such heavy afflictions on parents that loved her so tenderly, and submitted to their entreaties. Their wish was mentioned to Robert. He felt the deepest anguish of mind. He offered to stay at home and provide for his wife and family in the best manner that his daily labours could provide for them; that being the only means in his power. Even this offer they did not approve of; for humble as Miss Armour's station was, and great though her imprudence had been, she still, in the eyes of her partial parents, might look to a better connexion than that with my friendless and unhappy brother, at that time without house or biding-place. Robert at length consented to their wishes; but his feelings on this occasion were of the most distracting nature: and the impression of sorrow was not effaced, till by a regular marriage they were indissolubly united."
fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits. I can truly say, that pauvre inconnu as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour.

"It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone—I balanced myself with others—I watched every means of information to see how much ground I occupied as a man and a poet—I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation, where the lights and shades in my character were intended—I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause—but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect.

"I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably as I was thinking of indenting myself for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I
was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

"I had been for some days sculking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels*. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends—my chest was on the road to Greenock—I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*—when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.

"The Doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the earl of Glencairn."

* This was to oblige him to find security for the maintenance of his twin-children, whom he was not permitted to legitimize by a marriage with their mother.
He arrived at Edinburgh in the month of November 1786. In a few days he became an object of general curiosity and admiration. His poems attracted the notice of the editors of the *Lounger*; and the ninety-seventh number of that work was devoted to an account of his situation in life, with extracts from his poems. This gave him a still greater degree of publicity. His society was courted by persons of all ranks; and he frequently received from female beauty and elegance those attentions above all others most grateful to him. In his own language, he found himself "suddenly translated from the veriest shades of life into the glare of polite and learned observation."

The obscurity and hardship which he had hitherto encountered now seemed to disappear. Men of the highest pretensions and affluence subscribed for the new edition of his poems; and if their liberality had been equal to their ostentation, he might have been rendered independent for life.

But this anticipation did not obtrude itself on his thoughts. He disdained to make apparent kindness the medium of selfish aggrandizement. The moral honesty of his heart revolted at the idea of meanness or servility.

"His manners," says Professor Stewart, "were at this time, as they continued ever after, manly, simple, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without any thing that indicated forwardness,
arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities."

This propriety of demeanour was not always met by corresponding feelings. Some families invited him to their tables, not as a man of genius, but as a prodigy. Others solicited his company that they might enjoy the spectacle of his inebriation, and afterwards insult him for the intemperance which they had urged. He was sometimes exposed to humiliation from the pride of learning, and sometimes from the insolence which superiority of fortune incites. The nobility and gentry requested him to share their hospitality, and to join in the entertainments of their festive hours; but they could never forgive him for having been born and educated a peasant. They set their features to a semblance of friendship; but the hideous forms of pride and hypocrisy lay lurking in their hearts.

To these mortifications he opposed contempt or indifference. "When Dr. Blair," says he, "neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely
any emotion, What do I care for him or his pomp either?" The studied neglect of the nobility excited more bitter sensations. "The noble Glencairn," says he, "has wounded me to the soul. He shewed so much attention—engrossing attention—one day, to the only blockhead at table (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself), that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting. God bless him. though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day."

It may be considered one of the greatest infelicities of the life of Burns that he was ever introduced to such society. The literati had indeed a character among the vulgar for politeness and learning; but they were in reality the mere college spawn of the day. No friendship could subsist between them and a man who had nothing to recommend him but his genius and integrity. There was no basis on which it could be established; no mutual esteem; no congeniality of disposition. It was in vain that pedantry attempted to flatter, or dissimulation to exercise its blandishments. "When the hollow-hearted wretch," says Burns, "takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; and the proud man's wine so offends my palate that it chokes me in the gullet."

He viewed the calumny of the envious with
less resentment than a cordiality so base and peridious. On being told that a certain person had dwelt with studied malignity on his connexion with the female on whom he had placed his affections, he replied, "I was surprised to hear that any one, who pretends in the least to the manners of the gentleman, should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion; but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve."

The fate of Fergusson in the meantime presented itself to his mind; and the remembrance of the calamities of that unfortunate bard reminded him of his own destiny. He paid a visit to the church-yard in which he was buried, and embraced the earth which covered his remains. His grave was distinguished by no mark of respect. No stone was raised to his memory. His bones mouldered in the dust, unhonoured and unregarded.

On the sixth of February, 1787, he addressed a letter to the bailies of the Canongate, Edinburgh, requesting permission to erect a monument to his memory.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am sorry to be told, that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose
talents, for ages to come, will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

"Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the narrow house of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute to Fergusson's memory—a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

"I petition you then, gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame."

The bailies readily complied with his request. The inscription which he wrote for the monument is as follows:

HERE LIES
ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,
Born September 5th, 1751.—Died 16th October, 1774.

No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
"No storied urn nor animated bust?"
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust.

On the other side:

"By special grant from the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

Shortly after paying this mark of respect to the ashes of a kindred genius, he acquired, by the new edition of his poems, a sum of money
more than sufficient for his present exigencies. He therefore determined to gratify a desire he had long entertained, of visiting some of the most interesting districts of his native country. He left Edinburgh on the sixth of May; and in the course of his journey visited the pastoral scenery on the banks of the Tweed, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Nith. Returning through Annan and Dumfries to Ayrshire, he arrived at Mossgiel on the eighth of June.

It may easily be conceived with what pleasure he was received by his mother, his brothers, and sisters. He had left them, poor, persecuted, and friendless. He returned high in reputation, and improved in his circumstances. His ardent affections were unchanged. He was ready to divide with them the limited reward that fortune had bestowed.

Having remained with his relations a few weeks, he proceeded again to Edinburgh; and immediately set out on a tour to the Highlands. From this journey he again returned, to Ayrshire, where he spent the month of July.

In August he paid another visit to Edinburgh, whence, in the course of the same month, he made an excursion, in company with Mr. Adair, to view the banks of the Forth, and its romantic tributary the Devon. During a visit to Mrs. Bruce of Clackmanan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave to the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, his feelings were powerfully interested. She
was in possession of the helmet and two-handed sword of her great ancestor, with which she bestowed on her two visitors the honour of knighthood, remarking, that she had a better right to confer that title than some people.

At Dunfermline they visited the ruined abbey, and the abbey-church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. In the church-yard two broad flag-stones marked the grave of Robert Bruce. Burns knelt and kissed them. He afterwards returned with his friend to Edinburgh by Kinross and Queensferry.

These journeys, however, did not satisfy his curiosity. About the beginning of September he again set out on a more extended tour to the north. He passed through the heart of the Highlands; stretched in a northern direction about ten miles beyond Inverness; and bending his course eastward, across the island, returned by the shore of the German ocean. He remained at the metropolis during the greatest part of the winter. It was during this period that he wrote his celebrated Letters to Clarinda.

In February, 1788, he settled with his publisher, and found himself master of £400, including £100 for copy-right. With this sum he hastened to Ayrshire, and immediately advanced one hundred and eighty pounds to his brother Gilbert, who had undertaken to support their aged mother, and who was struggling with many difficulties in the farm of Mossgiel. His generous heart next turned to the object of his
attachment; and he atoned, by a public marriage, for the imprudence of which he had been guilty. *Her happiness or misery,* said he, *was in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?*

With little more than two hundred pounds, a wife and a young family, he was now to begin the world. He was at first perplexed how to proceed. He hesitated between returning to the plough, and soliciting the interest of his friends to get him a situation in the excise. At length the idea of being placed above the necessity of daily toil preponderated. *"If I were very sanguine,"* said he, *"I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury-warrant for supervisor or surveyor-general."*

Under this impression he addressed himself to Mr. Graham of Fintry. *"I had intended,"* said he, *"to have closed my last appearance on the stage of life in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and paternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last, and often best friend, rescued him."

He wrote in a similar strain to the earl of Glencairn; but his application, instead of stirring them up to make some honourable provision for him, only procured an employment which required the strongest efforts of virtue to neutralize its contagion. A commission was drawn
up, appointing the author of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* to the situation of a gauger!

Burns now discovered the extent of what he had to hope from the patronage of the great. "I never," he observed, "thought mankind very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit with my species. The many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have, in life, I have felt along the lines, and, d...n them! they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune.

"I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity—the intrepid, unyielding independence—the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage—Satan."

His proud nature, like that of the unfortunate hero of Milton, could not sink at once to the ignoble station to which power rather than justice had doomed him. He therefore took the farm of Ellisland, resolving, if possible, to provide for his family in a way more congenial to his feelings. "The commission lies by me," said he, with a mixture of scorn and humility, "and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed."
In June, 1788, he again entered into the sphere of humble and laborious life, without any other prospect than constant personal labour, and a frugality approaching to extreme penury. "I could almost lament the time," he observed, "that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life—insignificance and poverty. The heart of the man and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations for which I live. If miry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once; and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grubs: not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time."

On the third day he sat down to meditate on his hopeless situation. "I am such a coward in life," said he, "so tired of the service, that I would almost at any time, with Milton's Adami, 'gladly lay me in my mother's lap, and be at peace.'

"But a wife and children bind me to struggle with the stream, till some sudden squall shall overset the silly vessel, or, in the listless return of years, its own craziness reduce it to a wreck. Farewell now to those giddy follies, those varnished vices, which, though half-sanctified by
the bewitching levity of wit and humour, are at best but thriftless idling with the precious current of existence; nay, often poisoning the whole, that, like the plains of Jericho, the water is naught and the grounds barren; and nothing short of a supernaturally-gifted Elisha can ever after heal the evils.

"Wedlock, the circumstance that buckles me hardest to care, if virtue and religion were to be anything with me but names, was what in a few seasons I must have resolved on. In my present situation it was absolutely necessary. Humanity, generosity, honest pride of character, justice to my own happiness for after life, so far as it could depend (which it surely will a great deal) on internal peace—all these joined their warmest suffrages, their most powerful solicitations, with a rooted attachment, to urge the step I have taken. Nor have I reason, on her part, to repent it. I can fancy how, but have never seen where, I could have made a better choice. Come, then, let me act up to my favourite motto, that glorious passage in Young—

"On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!"

Under the impulse of these reflections, he immediately engaged in rebuilding the dwelling-house on his farm, which was inadequate to the accommodation of his family. On this occasion he resumed at times the occupation of a labourer. Pleased with surveying the grounds
he was about to cultivate, and with rearing a habitation for his wife and children, sentiments of independence buoyed up his mind; and a few days passed away, as he himself informs us, the most tranquil perhaps of his life.

His fame naturally drew upon him the attention of his neighbours, and he soon formed an estimate of their character. "I am here (Sept. 9.) busy with my harvest," said he, "but for all that pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose, they only know in graces, prayers, &c., and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the muses—they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet."

On the 16th, being driven in with his reapers by bad weather, he sat down to write to two of his female friends, who had formerly interested themselves in his welfare. "When I think of you," said he, "hearts the best, minds the noblest, of human kind—unfortunate, even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days than I can do with almost any body I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child.

"My Jean is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter
in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every
blast that blows and every shower that falls;
and I am only preserved from being chilled to
death by being suffocated with smoke. I do not
find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to
expect; but I believe, in time, it may be a sav-
ing bargain.

"To save me from that horrid situation of at
any time going down, in a losing bargain of a
farm, to misery, I have taken my excise in-
structions, and have my commission in my
pocket for any emergency of fortune. If I could
set all before your view, whatever disrespect
you, in common with the world, have for this
business, I know you would approve of my
idea."

His industry was frequently interrupted by
visiting his wife and children in Ayrshire; and
it was not till the end of January, 1789, that his
house at Ellisland was prepared for their re-
ception. They joined him a few days after.

He had now sufficient experience of his farm
to foresee that it would prove a ruinous con-
cern. He therefore applied to the commissioners
of excise to be employed; and his appointment
of gauger was made out for the district in which
Ellisland was situated.

But it was with difficulty he could reconcile
himself to his new occupation. "I do not know,"
says he, in writing to Mr. Ainslie, "how the
word exciseman, or the still more opprobrious
term, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too
have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow, is no bad settlement for a poet. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock:—

‘Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown; and, consequently, with us an honest fellow has the surest chance of preference.’

Burns soon discovered the impossibility of reconciling the business of the two occupations. His farm was in a great measure abandoned to his servants while he was engaged in his official duties. He might indeed be seen now and then in the spring, directing his plough, a labour in which he excelled; or with a white sheet, containing his seed-corn, slung across his shoulders, striding with measured steps among his turned-up furrows, and scattering the grain in the earth. But his farm no longer occupied the principal part of his thoughts. It was not at Ellisland that he was now in general to be found. Mounted on horseback, this high-minded Poet was pursuing the defaulters of the revenue among the hills and vales of Nithsdale. "I am
now," says he, "a poor rascally gauger, condemned to gallop at least two hundred miles every week, to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels."

His time was now completely occupied. To Dr. Anderson, who requested his assistance for a publication in which he was engaged, he replied, "Alas! Sir, you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an Advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva baund. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grinding-stone of excise; and, like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

To do what yet though damn'd I would abhor!"

Besides his duties in the excise, other circumstances interfered with his attention to his farm. He engaged in the formation and management of a society for purchasing and circulating books among the farmers of his neighbourhood; and frequently occupied himself in composing songs for the musical work of Mr. Johnson*, then in the course of publication. These employments, though useful and advantageous to those for whom he laboured, necessarily contributed to the abstraction of his thoughts, and the neglect of his own affairs.

The consequences may easily be imagined.

* The Scots Musical Museum, a work intended to unite the songs and the music of Scotland in one general collection.
CHARACTER OF BURNS.

He found it necessary, after the experience of three years and a half, to relinquish his lease. His stock and the produce of his lands were sold by public auction; and the reward of his genius was swallowed up in the claims of his landlord.

His employment in the excise had originally produced fifty pounds per annum; and his conduct having met with the approbation of the Board of Commissioners, he was appointed to a new district, the emoluments of which rose to about seventy. Hoping to support himself and his family on this humble income till promotion should reach him, he removed to a small house in Dumfries, about the end of the year 1791.

But circumstances occurred which prevented the fulfilment of his hopes. The early events of the French revolution interested the feelings and excited the hopes of many ardent and benevolent minds; and Burns, though a Jacobite and a cavalier, participated in the wish that prejudice and tyranny might disappear from the earth. He did not even conceal his sentiments; but spoke of the necessity of reform in the administration of government, with a freedom altogether incompatible with his dependent situation.

Information of this was given to the Board of Excise, with the exaggerations so general in such cases; and had not Mr. Graham, of Fintry, interfered in his behalf, "he would have been turned adrift," as he himself observes, "without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, to all the horrors of want."
"Had I had any other resource," said he, in a letter to a friend, "I probably might have saved them the trouble of a discharge; but the little money I gained by my publication is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother*, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men."

When he attempted to defend himself against these accusations, he was told that "his business was to act, not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for him to be silent and obedient." He was given to understand at the same time that all hopes of promotion were at an end.

This circumstance made a deep impression on his mind. Fame exaggerated his misfortune, and represented him as actually dismissed from his situation; and this report induced Mr. Erskine, of Mar, to propose a subscription in his favour. But he refused the offer with great elevation of sentiment, and nobly defended himself against the imputation of having made submissions, for the sake of his office, unworthy of his character.

"The partiality of my countrymen," said he, in a letter to that gentleman, "has brought me forward as a man of some genius, and has given me a character to support. In the Poet I have

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* Gilbert. His brother William died in London a short time before.
avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the Man. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and children, have pointed out my present occupation as the only eligible line of life within my reach. Still my honest name is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of the degrading epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. Often, in blasting anticipation, have I listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exultingly asserting that Burns, notwithstanding the fanfaronade of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held up to public view, and to public estimation, as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the lowest of mankind.

"In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my strong disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man from birth and an exciseman by necessity; but—I will say it—the sterling of his honest worth poverty could not debase; and his independent British mind oppression might bend, but could not subdue.

"When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. Burns, in whose behalf you have so generously
interested yourself, I have here, in his native colburs, drawn as he is; but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats, get the least knowledge of the picture, it would ruin the poor bard for ever!"

It was one of the last acts of his life to copy this heart-rending epistle into a book which he kept for recording such circumstances as were worthy of preservation. "Alas!" said he, "how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness—in all the charities and all the virtues—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him; and, with a grin of satisfaction, see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin."

For the remaining three years of his life his leisure was wholly devoted to the success of a musical publication, projected by George Thomson, of Edinburgh. The songs which he furnished include nearly all he wrote during this period, and many of his happiest efforts in this species of composition. These, with the letters connected with them, occupy the greatest part of the fourth volume of the present edition.
About this time a difference of political opinion was frequently made the ground of private animosity; and several persons with whom Burns was sometimes prevailed upon to associate, were always ready to oppose or to misrepresent his sentiments. Being invited one evening to spend a few hours with a convivial party, the conversation turned on the events of the day. As the glass went round, he was called on for his toast. "May our success in the present war," said he, "be equal to the justice of our cause." This gave great offence to an individual present, who delivered himself with a warmth and bitterness which excited the indignation of the poet. "From the expressions Capt. ______ made use of to me," he afterwards observed, "had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble. I shall only add, that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. ______, should use me in the manner I conceive he has done."

In 1795, when the nature of public affairs was supposed to call for a general arming of the people, he appeared in the ranks of the Dum-
fries volunteers, and employed his poetical powers in stimulating their patriotism.

Though by nature of an athletic form, his constitution was rather delicate than robust. The hard labour and sufferings of the early part of his life produced a depression of spirits which the ill usage of the world afterwards contributed to augment. He had, besides, a disposition to headache, and violent and irregular palpitations of the heart.

His personal appearance now began to decline; and though his appetite continued unimpaired, he was himself sensible that his constitution was sinking. He was no longer capable of those incessant mental exertions which he had hitherto made; and he reposed for a few months from the unprofitable drudgery of composing for musical collections. This pause in his labour alarmed Mr. Thomson. "Am I," said he, "never to hear from you again? I know and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late; but I trust that returning health will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish 'married to immortal verse.'"

In January, 1796, he was confined to his bed by a severe attack of rheumatism. His appetite began to fail; his hand shook, and his voice faltered on any exertion or emotion. His pulse

* See vol. ii. p. 234.
became weaker and more rapid, and pain in the larger joints, and in the hands and feet, deprived him of the enjoyment of refreshing sleep.

In this distressing situation, he employed his intervals of ease in writing to his friends, not to solicit assistance, but to inform them that he must shortly die. But Burns had no friends. Although his illness, his poverty, and his wants were generally known, no one proposed measures for his relief. Mrs. Dunlop, a peevish old woman, whom he had dispossessed of an evil spirit*, and uniformly treated with filial tenderness, deserted him in his hour of need. "Alas! Madam," said he, in writing to her a third time, without receiving an answer, "I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. I can ill afford at this time to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. What sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess."

* This took place in 1786. A long and severe illness had reduced her mind to a most distressing state of depression. In this situation she happened to read The Cotter's Saturday Night, and was so struck with the description of the humble cottagers, that it operated on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, expelled the demon ennui, and restored her to inward harmony and satisfaction. She invited the Author to her house; and a correspondence afterwards took place between them which ended only with his life. It was not, however, without its interruptions. She sometimes accused him of a want of reverence for religion, and sometimes expressed her displeasure at his political sentiments. At one time she imagined that he did not read her letters; at another she charged him with having ridiculed her. At last, she ceased to answer him at all. The assertion of Dr. Currie, that the poet received a satisfactory explanation of her silence previous to his death, requires confirmation.
Some months after, finding himself getting worse, he informed Mr. Thomson of the circumstance. "Alas! my dear Thomson," said he, "I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again. 'By Babel's streams I have sat and wept,' almost ever since I wrote you last. I have only known existence by the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain. Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Ferguson—

Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent heaven,
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This moving picture of suffering made no impression on Mr. Thomson. A generous heart, unincumbered by any previous debt of gratitude, would have delighted to solace his sinking spirits, to administer to his necessities, and to merit the blessing of him that was ready to perish. But this man, though overwhelmed with a load of obligation, felt no other emotion than that which was expressed by a cold wish for his recovery, and a hope that he would "then see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to his family, to his friends, and to the world."

On the fourth of June, a lady of a similar disposition advised him to go to the birth-day assembly to shew his loyalty. "Madam," replied he, "I am in such miserable health as to be
utterly incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatism, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam—'Come curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel.' Would you have me, in such circumstances, to copy you out a love song?"

It had been hoped by some of his friends, that if he could live through the months of spring, the succeeding season might restore him. But they were disappointed. The genial warmth of the sun infused no vigour into his languid frame. The summer wind blew upon him, but produced no refreshment. He was advised to try the effects of sea-bathing; and for that purpose he went to Brow, in Annandale, about ten miles east of Dumfries, on the shore of the Solway-frith.

Shortly after his arrival here (5th July), a lady, who resided in the neighbourhood, and with whom he was formerly acquainted, invited him to dinner; and as he was unable to walk, she sent her carriage for him to the cottage where he lodged. As he entered her apartment she perceived the stamp of death imprinted on his features. He seemed already stepping on the threshold of eternity. His first salutation was, "Well, Madam, have you any commands for the other world?" He ate little, and complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness and feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon. His anxiety for his family hung
heavy on him; and when he alluded to their approaching desolation, his heart was touched with pure and unmingled sorrow.

On the 7th, he found it necessary to write to Mr. Cunningham to exert his influence to secure him from losing half of his income. "Alas! my friend," said he, "I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled! The deuce of the matter is this—when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to £.35 instead of £.70. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters—with a wife and five children at home, on £.35? I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our commissioners of excise to grant me the full salary. I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly en poete. If I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger!"

In addition to his sufferings from indigence and neglect, he was incessantly dunned by a heartless creditor. To relieve himself from his impoverty, he applied to Mr. Thomson (12th July) for a trifling sum. "After all my boasted independence," said he, "curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel
... of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God’s sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half-distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen. Forgive me! Forgive me!"

On the same day he addressed a letter to Mrs. Dunlop. "I have written you so often," said he, "without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness, which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that ‘bourn whence no traveller returns.’ Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!"

This affecting adieu was received with the same indifference as his previous communications; and was, like them, thought unworthy of a reply. Mr. Thomson paid more respect to appearances. When he perceived that Burns implored five pounds, not on account of all that...
he had done, but of something more which he was willing to perform, he transmitted the paltry sum, with an assurance that he had been "ruminating for three months how to alleviate his sufferings, and that the amount requested was the very sum he proposed sending."

It is painful to think, that the abilities of Burns, though they procured riches and independence to others, were never of any real advantage to himself. It has been well observed, "that he found men willing to receive his labour without reward, because they knew not the delicacy of rewarding a man of his ardent character; or who insulted while they pretended to reward—that though he was flattered, courted, and admired by the rich, the learned, the witty, and the proud, he could obtain no higher office, no greater security against want, no ampler provision for his wife and family, than an exciseman's place of fifty, and afterwards seventy pounds a-year—that when he lay on the bed of sickness and death, solicitation was needful to secure him from losing half of his scanty stipend—and that when the agonies of dissolution were almost upon him, the horrors of a jail compelled his high mind to beg the loan of five pounds to preserve him from being dragged, half-dying, to a prison. Yes! and the man who had for years received the finest productions of his genius—the man who had enriched himself by his labours—the man who once, and only once, offered to remunerate him by five pounds—
that man to whom the poet's dying prayer was made, poorly contented himself with sending just the sum demanded, though he knew it was predestined to discharge a debt, and that his unhappy friend (if the name may be profaned) must still feel the same domestic wants, the same agonies of mind. This person has not blushed to publish the affecting letter of the expiring bard, with the memorial of his own penurious conduct. That Burns was reduced to such a humiliation must for ever call forth our pity; that his humiliation was so answered, must excite sentiments of indignation and contempt in every manly, in every liberal bosom."

But the sordidness of Mr. Thomson did not end here. He knew and felt that his conduct had been mean, selfish, and ungenerous; but instead of yielding to emotions of contrition or remorse, he increased his injustice by the most insulting proposition that ever was made to a dying man. "Pray, my good Sir," said he, "is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the mean time it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me
intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive." Burns made no reply. The acuteness of his sufferings prevented him from noticing this indecent mockery of speculating avarice.

At first Burns imagined that bathing in the sea had been of benefit to him. The pains in his limbs were relieved; but this was immediately followed by a new attack of fever.

When brought back to his own house in Dumfries, on the 18th of July, he was no longer able to stand upright. Accumulated misfortunes and the general baseness of mankind actually broke his heart. The destitute situation of his wife and infant family preyed deeply on his spirits, and imparted incessant shocks to a frame already exhausted. Yet he alluded to his poverty, at times, with something approaching to his wonted gaiety. "What business," said he to Dr. Maxwell, who attended him, "has a physician to waste his time on me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough to carry me to my grave." At this time a tremor pervaded his frame. His tongue was parched; and, when not roused by

* It is a melancholy fact, that Robert Thomson, the brother of this man, subsisted for the last three years of his life on one meal a-day, and that meal was often a penny loaf. He died, about nine months ago, in the utmost penury and wretchedness, in an obscure lodging, in Greek-street, Soho. He was author of several works, and has left behind him some indifferent poetry.
conversation, his mind sunk into a kind of torpor. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished. On the fourth, his sufferings were terminated.

Such were the life and death of Robert Burns, the greatest and most original genius that his country ever produced. If it was his misfortune that he lived in an age despicable for its avarice and degeneracy, it was his glory that he raised himself, in spite of the neglect of corrupt and haughty men, to the highest pitch of intellectual elevation; and that he sustained, at the hour of death, the desertion of friends, the persecution of enemies, and the utmost malice of disastrous fortune, with a courage unaffected, undaunted, unsubdued.

He left a widow and four sons. The ceremonial of his interment took place on the 26th of July. It was accompanied by the volunteers of Dumfries, the fencible infantry of Ayrshire, and the regiment of cavalry of the Cinque Ports. On the same day Mrs. Burns was delivered of a son, who did not long survive his father.

Burns was nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, bespoke uncommon capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardour and intelligence. His face was well formed; and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. His mode of dress-
ing, and a certain fulness and bend in his shoulders, characteristic of his original profession, disguised in some degree the natural symmetry of his form. His physiognomy had an expression of deep penetration, and of calm thoughtfulness approaching to melancholy.

His manner and address bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents. His conversation was extremely fascinating; rich in wit, humour, whim, and occasionally in serious and apposite reflection. In the society of men of taste he was eloquent and impressive. But it was in female circles that his powers of expression displayed their utmost force. A Scottish lady, accustomed to the best society, declared, with characteristic naïveté, that no man's conversation ever carried her so completely off her feet as that of Burns; and an English lady, particularly acquainted with the most distinguished characters of the day, remarked that there was a charm about him in his social hours that she had never seen equalled.

He was no less amiable in all the relations of private life. He ascribed most of his own principles and feelings to his father's instructions and example; and frequently applied to him that passage in the Minstrel which so truly describes the condition and the hopes of our nature.

Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Did him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live?
CHARACTER OF BURNS.

Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive,
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No! Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive;
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright thro' th' eternal year of love's triumphant reign.

This truth sublime, his simple sire had taught:
In sooth 'twas almost all the shepherd knew.

He was a kind and attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. He was anxious to train them to habits of reflection and piety, and to keep them pure from every form of vice; and it was his earnest desire, that while they lived they might live virtuously and honourably. As a husband he was tender and indulgent; and to this hour his widow never names him but in terms of the profoundest respect, and the deepest regret, either to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his habitual attention, which ended only with his life.

As a friend no views of selfishness ever made him faithless to those whom he had once honoured with that name; and if, at any time, he was forced by insult or disgust to turn aside from them, his resentment died away under the influence of pity and forgiveness. As a citizen he never neglected a single duty. Although so poor as frequently to be on the brink of ruin, looking forward, now to the situation of a foot-soldier, now to that of a common beggar, as no unnatural consummation of his evil fortune, he was as proud and independent as if he had possessed a princely re-
venue. Neither the influence of the low-minded crowd around him, nor the privations which he endured, ever led him to incur the burden of pecuniary obligation. No chicanery, no sordidness ever appeared in his conduct. Even in the midst of distress, while his feeling heart sunk under the secret consciousness of indigence, and the apprehensions of absolute want, he bore himself loftily to the world. Though he possessed an acuteness of discrimination, and a command of language that might have guided the councils of nations, and which would have been eagerly courted by any party, he would have perished by famine rather than have submitted to the degradation of being the tool of a faction. He had a loftiness of sentiment that raised him above the idea of being a mercenary even in a good cause; and his laurels were never stained by a single act of venality. Through the whole of his life he had to maintain a hard struggle with cares; and often laboured under those depressions to which genius is subject; yet his spirit never stooped from its lofty career, and to the very end of his warfare with himself and with fortune, continued strong in its independence.

Yet with all the nobility of his mind, the kindness and generosity of his nature, and the

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* It is well known that he refused a sum equal to his whole annual income, from Mr. Perry, editor of the Morning Chronicle, for the support of those measures which he thought most for the interest of his country.
supremacy of his genius, his fate has been unusually severe. The same fatality that attended him through life, pursued him beyond the grave. His manuscripts unfortunately fell into the hands of Dr. Currie, a man of mean intellect, and a relation of Mrs. Dunlop. Not content with mutilating some of his best productions and suppressing others, he seizes on every opportunity of undervaluing his powers, of viewing him as a prodigy to whom the notice of the opulent was an honour, and of dwelling with complacency on what he calls the lowness of his birth and education. Under the mask of benevolence to his family, he stabs his reputation with certainty and security. He perverts his convivial habits, his wit and humour, and his exemplary conduct in domestic life, into habitual drunkenness, impiety, neglect of his professional duty, and of his family. He charges him at one time with licentiousness; at another he hints at circumstances which never took place, and then stops short as if unwilling to expose the crimes or the frailties of his author. Sometimes he invents a story; and pretending that he has the proof in his own hands, quotes several passages of his writings; at others he questions his right to the character of a poet, and describes his versification as generally rude and inharmonious. When he applauds, his panegyrics are insolent, sparing, and invidious; and when he mixes criticism with the slang of his profession, the drug is the very essence of malice.
The successors of this faithless editor have not only echoed his misrepresentations, but added to his calumnies. Walter Scott, in an article in the Quarterly Review, after betraying a brutal insensibility to merit, and an overweening contempt of low-born poets, brands him with cowardice, with attempting to commit murder, and afterwards suicide. "Burns," says this flatterer of sloth and luxury, in alluding to the insult which he received from Captain——, "was a plebeian, untinged with the slightest shade of that spirit of chivalry which, since the feudal times, has pervaded the higher ranks of European society. The lowness of his birth and habits of society prevented rules of punctilious delicacy from making any part of his education; nor did he, it would seem, see anything so rational in the practice of duelling as afterward to adopt or to affect the sentiments of the higher ranks upon that subject. On this point, therefore, the pride and high spirit of Burns differed from those of the world around him. He wanted that chivalrous sensibility of honour which places reason on the sword's point. He was utterly inaccessible to all friendly advice. To lay before him his errors, or to point out their consequences, was to touch a string that jarred every feeling within him. On such occasions, his, like Churchill's, was

The mind which, starting, heaves the heart-felt groan,
And hates the form she knows to be her own.

It is a dreadful truth, that when racked and
tortured by the well-meant and warm expostulations of an intimate friend, he at length started up in a paroxysm of frenzy, and drawing a sword cane, which he usually wore, made an attempt to plunge it into the body of his adviser. The next instant he was with difficulty withheld from suicide."

It would be injuring the firmness, the integrity, and the unblemished honour of Burns, to notice these foul and malignant imputations otherwise than in terms of utter loathing and contempt. Burns, we believe, never boasted of a courage that was a stranger to his breast. It is therefore fortunate for Walter that the subject of his aspersions is no more. His perpetual sniveling about chivalry would have availed him nothing. The manly and indignant eye of Burns would have surveyed his carcass with ineffable disdain; and Thersites, that compound of slander and deformity, would have again writhed under the cudgel of Ulysses.

The malignity of Jeffray is no less bitter. This person, it is well known, is instinctively a literary bravo, who has grown grey in wielding the dagger of moral assassination. We are not therefore surprised when he says, "that the leading vice in the character of Burns, and the cardinal deformity indeed of all his productions, is his contempt for prudence, decency, and regularity, and his admiration of thoughtlessness, oddity and vehement sensibility; that he represents himself as a hair-brained senti-
mental soul, constantly carried away by fine fancies and visions of love and philanthropy, and born to confound and despise the cold-blooded sons of prudence and sobriety; that he is perpetually making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence, and talking with much complacency and exultation of the offence he has occasioned to the sober and correct part of mankind; that this odious slang infects almost all his prose and a very great proportion of his poetry, and communicates to both a character of immorality at once contemptible and hateful; and that his apology is to be found in the original lowness of his situation, and the slightness of his acquaintance with the world."

This is precisely what might have been expected from a man who has been suffered to sneer with impunity at the prosperity, the patriotism, and the religion of his country; and who has uniformly exerted himself in pandering to the basest passions of the human heart. The laws punish with stripes, and even with death, crimes comparatively venial. Why is the odious hypocrite, the wretch who hates and belies the man whom he cannot equal, the cowardly assassin of character, permitted to escape? If he elude the vengeance of man shall he escape the lightning of Heaven?

It is melancholy to reflect, that though Burns possessed a candour which led him to view all the actions of others on the brightest side, the
purest of his own have been either overlooked or distorted. His virtues have been denied; and when that could not be done, they have been depreciated. But prejudices will pass away, and men of feeling and sentiment will do justice to his memory. They will be influenced by no personal, no political enmities. They will admire his generosity, his patience under adversity, and his magnanimity on the most trying occasions. They will reverence his fidelity to the female who trusted her fate to his honour. They will applaud that noble sentiment which he uttered, and which ought to be engraven in letters of gold, *The happiness or misery of a fellow-creature was placed in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?* They will contemplate with delight that act of piety by which he gave the half of his fortune to relieve his brother from distress, and to support his aged mother. They will regard with astonishment his perfect disinterestedness in the midst of privations of every kind, and regret that ever he devoted a single moment to the service of those miserable beings who forsook him in his last hour. They will perceive in his poetry that "light from heaven" which gives to the thoughts and language of genius the force of inspiration. They will acknowledge in his letters the warmth of that eloquence which is so expressive of the intense fire of his disposition. In short, they will observe that he is distinguished in all his actions and in all his writings, by an abhorrence of
oppression, by a liberal and elevated mind, and by a passion for glory, freedom, and sincerity. When they consider these divine qualities of his heart, they will be surprised and shocked to hear that men could be found so base as to vilify his character, and to represent him as the most wicked and abandoned of his species. But this will only increase their veneration for his memory. They will invest him with the character of a prophet, and show how literally and truly his predictions have been fulfilled. They will recognise in Scott and Jeffray the calumniators to whom he "listened, and trembled, in blasting anticipation, at the idea of the degrading epithets that malice or misrepresentation might affix to his name." They will point at them, too, as the "future hackney scribblers, who, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exultingly asserted that Burns, notwithstanding the fanfaronade of independence to be found in his works, was quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the lowest of mankind." They will then turn with infinite loathing from the rancour of Scott and Jeffray, and rejoice that while their names are rotting in the charnel-house of oblivion, that of Burns will continue to increase in lustre, and to gather fresh laurels in its progress to immortality.
POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.
PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following trifles are not the production of the poet who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the legancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural home, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the Author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, at least in their original language, a fountain shut up, and a book sealed. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic comppeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from he earliest impulses of the softer passion, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming
tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scottish rhymes together, looking upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine Elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "Humility has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word Genius, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawning of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal, unaffected sincerity, declares, that even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scottish Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks—not the mercenary bow over a counter—but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dullness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.
DEDICATION

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition to sing in his Country's Service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native Land—those to bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their Ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elisha did Elisha—at the Plough; and threw her inspiring Mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil in my native tongue. I tuned my soul, artless notes as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under her honoured protection.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours. That path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present my address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours. I was bred to the Plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the tie. I come to congratulate my Country that the blood of her
ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great Fountain of honour, the Monarch of the universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may social Joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native Seats; and may domestic Happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May Corruption shrink at your kindling, indignant glance! and may Tyranny in the Ruler, and Licentiousness in the People, equally find you an inexorable foe?

I have the honour to be,

With the sincerest gratitude, and highest respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most devoted, humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, April 4, 1787.
'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Caesar,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gypsy's messin:
At kirk or market, mill or smiddle,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luanth ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang *,
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash and faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sousie, baws'nt face,
Ay gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his touzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdles wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack and thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff't and snowkit,
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal
TALES.

Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worried ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the Lords o' the Creation.

CAESAR.

I've after wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himself;
His flunkies answer at the bell:
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonie silken purse
As lang's my tail, where, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks,

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toilling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than onie tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk put their painch in,
I own it's past my comprehension.

**Luath.**

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fasht eneugh;
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like,
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But how it comes I never kenn'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
And buirdly chiels, and clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

**Cæsar.**

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
L—d, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
An' monie a time my heart's been wae,
oor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
low they maun thole a factor's snash:
e'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
e'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
while they maun stau', wi' aspect humble;
n' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
but surely poor folk maun be wretches?

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
ho' constantly on poortith's brink:
hey're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
he view o' t gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
hey're ay in less or mair provided;
n' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
heir grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
he prattling things are just their pride,
that sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie-worth o' nappie
can make the bodies unco happy;
they lay aside their private cares,
'to mind the kirk and state affairs:
they'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon' on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial, rantin kirns,
When rural life o' every station,
Unite in common recreation:
Love blinks, Wit slaps, and social Mirth,
Forgets there's care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks cracking crouse,
The young anes ranting thro' the house—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thikns to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle Master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a-parliamentin,
For Britain's guid his saul indentin.
Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;

For Britain's guid! guid faith I doubt it:
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
An' saying aye or no' they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or, maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To make a tour, and tak a whirl;
To learn bon ton an' see the worl'.

There at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Wh-re-hunting among groves o' myrtles:
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae monie a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!
O, would they stay aback frae courts.
An' please themselves wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows!
Except for breakin o' their timmer,
Or speakin lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will you tell me, Master Caesar,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
The very thought o't need na fear them.

Caesar.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true they need na starve or sweat,
'Tho' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' gripes an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them
They make enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.
A country-fellow at the plough,
His acres till'd, he's right enough;
A country-girl at her wheel,
Her dizziness done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst:
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless.
An' e'en their sports, their balls, an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places;
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart,
The men cast out in party matches,
Then souther a' in deep debauches;
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jades thegither.
Whyles o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty:
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stack-yard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man an' woman;
But this is gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night;
The bum clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood routin i' the loan:
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men but dogs;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

TAM O' SHANTER,
A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogilio full is this Duke.
Gawin Douglas.

When Chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit boising at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gath'ring her brows like gath'ring storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he, frae Ayr, ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonic lasses.)
O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober,
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller:
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on,
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious;
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
*Tam* did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy;
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but *Tam* was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or, like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or, like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or, like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm—
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches *Tam* maun ride;
That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellowed:
That night a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, *Meg,*
A better never lifted leg,
*Tam* skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whyles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whyles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whyles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
*Kirk-Alloway* was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snae the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken *Charlie* brak's neck bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare *Mungo's* mither hang'd hersel.—
Before him *Doon* pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
*Kirk Alloway* seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold *John Barleycorn!*
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!

*Vol. 1.*
Wi' tippeny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae we'll face the Devil!—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noodle,
Fair play, he car'd na Deils a bodle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A wimock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof an' rafters a' did diri.—
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which, heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red rusted;
Five scymitaris, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strang'led;
A knife a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout,
And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk:
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glower'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark.

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen;
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping an' flinging on a crumnock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.
But *Tam* kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night inlisted in the core
(Lang after kenn'd on *Carrick* shore!
For monie a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear),
Her cutty-sark o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee *Nannie*,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how *Nannie* lap and flang,
(A soupel jad she was and strang)
And how *Tam* stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
*Tam* tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, *Weel done, Cutty-sark!*
And in an instant a' was dark:
And scarcely had he *Maggie* rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When Catch the thief! resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woeful woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane* of the brig:
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The sentient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought aff her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claut her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

* It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream.—It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogle, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK,
'A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd.
Ev'n Ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in hell,
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel'
's a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, and bushes kenn'd ay
Frae ghaists an' witches.
The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns wi' a' my pow'r,
    I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
    I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
    To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will.
    I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe out-owre ae shouther,
    Clear, dangling hang;
A three-taed leister on the ither
    Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa.
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava!
    And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp, an' sma' 
    As cheeks o' branks!

Guid-e'en, quo' I; Friend! hae ye been mawin
When ither folk are busy sawin *?

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
   But naething spak;
At length, says I, Friend, whare ye gaun,
   Will ye go back?

It spak right howe—My name is Death,
But be na fley'd.—Quoth I, Guid faith!
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
   But tent me, billie;
I red ye wel, tak care o' scath,
   See there's a gully!

Gudeman, quo' he, put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its metal;
   To be mislear'd,
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
   Out-owre my beard.

Weel, wel! says I, a bargain be't;
Come, gie's your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
   This while ye hae been monie a gate,
At monie a house.

Ay, ay! quo' he, an' shook his head,
It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed,
   An' choke the breath;
Folk maun do something for their bread,
   An' sae maun Death.

* An epidemical fever was then raging in that part of the country.
Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
An' monie a scheme in vain's been laid;
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook's* taen up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur me.

Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan†
An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin,
An' pouk my hips.

See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd monie a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
Dam'd haet they'll kill!

'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaeu,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less I'm sure I've hundreds slain;
But Deil-ma care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

* This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is, professionally, a brother of the sovereign Order of the Ferula; but, by intuition and inspiration, is at once an apothecary, surgeon, and physician.
† Buchan's Domestic Medicine.
Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortify'd the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
   It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
   Of a kail-runt.

I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
   Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
   O' hard whin rock.

Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Altho' their face he ne'er had kenn'd it,
Just —— in a kail-blade and send it,
   As soon's he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
   At once he tells't.

And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kind o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
   He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
   As A B C.

Calces o' fossils, earth, and trees;
True sal-marinium o' the seas;
The farina of beans and pease,
   He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
   He can content ye.
Forbye some new uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail-clippings,
And monie mae.

Waes me for Johnny Ged's Hole* now,
Quo I, if that the news be true!
His braw calf-ward, whare gowans grew
Sae white and bonie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the pleugh;
They'll ruin Johnny!

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' monie a sheugh,
In twa-three year.

Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap an' pill.

An honest Wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel bred,

* The grave-digger.
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

A countra laird had taen the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts.
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well,
The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,
Was laird himsel.

A bonie lass, ye kenn'd her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame;
She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
An's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his d-mn'd dirt:

But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead's a herrin;
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin!
But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rais'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
And sae did Death.

MI SC E L L A N I E S.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

Inscribed to R. Aiken, Esq.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

Gray.

I.
My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise;
To you I sing in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

VOL. I.
II.
November chill blaws loud wi' angry sigh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hame-
ward bend.

III.
At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, todlin, stacher thro' To meet their dad wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

IV.
Belyve the elder bairns come drappin in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.
V.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.

The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

vi.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight to jauk or play;
An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!

vii.

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
 Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Withheart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild worthless rake.
VIII.

Wi’ kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he taks the mother’s eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit’s no ill ta’en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye;
The youngster’s artless heart o’erflows wi’ joy,
But blate and laithfu’, scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi’ a woman’s wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu’an sae grave;
Weel pleas’d to think her bairn’s respected like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I’ve paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
If Heaven a draught of heav’nly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
’Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In others’ arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev’ning gale.

X.

Is there in human form that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny’s unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur’d arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil’d?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o’er their child!
Then paints the ruin’d maid, and their distraction wild!
XI.
But now the supper crowns their simple board!
The halesome *parritch*, chief o' *Scotia*’s food:
The soup their only *Hawkie* does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cud:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain’d kebbuck fell,
An' aft he's press’d, an' aft he ca's it good;
The frugal wifie, garrulous will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII.
The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big *Ha'-Bible*, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearin thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And *Let us worship God!* he says with solemn air.

XIII.
They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps *Dundee*’s wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name:
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far-o' *Scotia*’s holy lays:
Compar’d with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.
xiv.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or, rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

xv.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heav'n the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounce'd by
Heaven's command.

xvi.

Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing."
That thus they all shall meet in future days:

* Pope's Windsor Forest.
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII.
Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!
The Pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

XVIII.
Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That he who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

XIX.
From scenes like these old Scotie's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of Kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God!"
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human-kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

XXI.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert:
But still the patriot and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, Notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the Author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.

HALLOWEEN.*

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.

Goldsmith.

I.

Upon that night, when fairies light,
On Cassilis Downans† dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;

* Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful, mid night errands; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the earls of Cassilis.
Or for *Colean* the rout is tae,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the *Cove*, to stray an' rove
Amang the rocks an' streams
To sport that night.

II.
Amang the bonie winding banks,
Where *Doon* rins, wimplin, clear,
Where Bruce ance rul'd the martial ranks,
And shook the *Carrick* spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To *burn* their nits, an' *pou* their stocks,
An' haud their *Halloween*
Fu' blythe that night.

III.
The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, and some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
Whyles fast that night.

---

* A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.

† The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were earls of Carrick.
Then first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks* maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' graip, an' wale,
For muckle anes an' straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the bow-kail,
An' pow't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee-things, todlin, rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the custock's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

* The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocker, or fortune; and the taste of the custock, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.
The lasses staw frae mangled them a' 
To pou their stalks o' corn*;
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behind the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tup-pickle maist was lost,
When kiutlin i' the false-house†
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel hoordet nits‡
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads an' lasses' fates,
Are there that that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

* They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c. makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this he calls a false-house.

‡ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be
Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wad na tell;
But this is Jock, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel;
He bleez'd owre her an' she owre him,
As they wad ne'er mair part!
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie wi' his bow-ha'il-runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mallie, nae doubt took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap and swore by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel an' Rob in;
In loving breeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin;
Nell's heart was dancin at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to look for't;
Rob, stowlins, pried her bonie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.
But Merran sat behind their backs,
   Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
   And slips out by hersel:
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
   An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins grapit for the bauks,
   And in the blue-clue* throws then,
   Right fear't that night.

An' ay she win't, an' ay she swat,
   I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the pat,
   Guid L—d! but she was quakin!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
   Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
   She did na wait on talkin
   To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
   Will ye go wi' me, graunie?

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, Wha hands? i. e. Who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.
MISCELLANIES.

I'll eat the apple* at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnie:
She suft' her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic'd na an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

XIV.
Ye little skelpie limmer's face!
How daur you try sic sportin,
As seek the foul Thief onie place,
For him to spae your fortune?
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' died deleeret
On sic a night.

XV.
Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

* Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

L.2
XVI.

Our stible-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
He's sin' gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed*, I mind it weel,
/ An' he made unco light o't;
But monie a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frightet
That very night.

XVII.

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense:
The auld gudman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bade him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Some time when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

* Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, Hemp-seed I saw thee; hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee. Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, Come after me, and shaw thee; that is, show thyself! in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, Come after me, and harrow thee.
XVIII.
He marches thro' amang the stacks,
  Tho' he was something sturtin;
The *graip* he for a *harrow* taks,
  An' haurls at his curpin:
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
  Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass,
  Come after me, and draw thee
As fast this night.

XIX.
He whistl'd up Lord Lennox march,
  To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
  He was sae fley'd an' eerie;
Till presently he hears a squeak,
  An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
  An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

XX.
He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
  In dreadful desperation!
An' young an' auld cam rinnin' out,
  An' hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
  Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
'Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
  An' wha was it but *grumphie*
Asteor that night!
XXI.
Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen
   To winn three wechts o' naething*;
But for to meet the Deil her lane,
   She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
    An' twa red cheekit apples,
'To watch, while for the barn she sets,
   In hopes to see Tam Kipples
   That vera night.

XXII.
She turns the key wi' cannie throw,
   And owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
   Syne bauldly in she enters;
A ratron rattl'd up the wa',
   An' she cry'd, L—d preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
   An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervour,
   Fu' fast that night.

XXIII.
They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice:
    They hecht him some fine braw ane;

* This charm must likewise be performed, unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.
It chanc'd the stack he *faddom'd thrice*;
Was timmer-propt for thrawin:
He taks a swirlie, auld moss oak,
For some black, grousome carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes came haurlin
Aff's nieves that night.

xxiv.
A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kitten;
But, och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare *three laird's lands meet at a burn*†,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

xxv.
Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyls round a rocky scar it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bear-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

† You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring or rivulet, where three lairds' lands meet, and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

XXVI.
Amang the brachens, on the brae
Between her an' the moon,
The Deil, or else an outlier quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
Near lav'rock height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, an' in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

XXVII.
In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three* are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's-year did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

* Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged: he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid: if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.
XXVIII.

Wi’ merry sangs, an’ friendly cracks,  
I wat they did na weary;   
An’ unco tales, an’ funnie jokes,  
Their sports were cheap an’ cheery. 
'Till butter’d so’ns*, wi’ fragrant lunt,  
Set a’ their gabs a-steerin;  
Syne wi’ a social glass o’ strunt,  
They parted aff careerin  
Fu’ blythe that night.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS,  
A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

When lyart leaves bestrow the yird,  
Or wavering like the Bauckie-bird †,  
Bedim cauld Boreas’ blast;  
When hail-stanes drive wi’ bitter skyte,  
And infant frosts begin to bite,  
In hoary cranreuch drest;  
Ae night at e’en a merry core  
O’ randie, gangrel bodies,  
In Poosie-Nansie’s held the splore,  
To drink their orra duddies:

* Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween supper.

† The old Scotch name for the Bat.
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
    They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
    The vera girdle rang.

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac’d wi’ mealy bags,
    And knapsack a’ in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi’ usquebae an’ blankets warm—
    She blinket on her sodger:
An’ ay he gies the tozie drab
    The tither skelpin kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
    Just like an aumos dish.
Ilk smack still did crack still,
    Just like a cadger’s whip,
Then staggering and swaggering
    He roar’d this ditty up—

AIR.

Tune—“Soldier’s Joy.”

I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
    Lal de dandle, &c.

My ‘prenticeship I past where my leader breath’d his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play’d,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.
    Lal de dandle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt’ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country heed me, with Elliot to head me,
I’d clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.
    Lal de dandle, &c.
And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de dauldle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentime for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of the drum.
Lal de dauldle, &c.

RECITATIVO.
He ended; and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore;
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out, Encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar:

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier Laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my lovers was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
He ventur'd the soul, and I risked the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dal, &c.
Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified lot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spoutoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Then neist outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For monie a pursie she had hooked,
And had in monie a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sob she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—"O an ye were dead Gudeman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

Chorus.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.
With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged n' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now, a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappan limb and gaucy middle,
He reach'd nae higher,

Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, an' upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' Allegretto glee
His giga solo:

AIR.
_Tune—"Whistle o'er the lave o't."

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
An' go wi' me to be my dear,
Ae' then your ev'ry care and fear
May whistle o'er the lave o't.

_Chorus._
I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tuues that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle o'er the lave o't.

At kirls and weddings we're be there,
And O! sae nicely's we will fate;
We'll bouse about till daddie Care
Sing whistle o'er the lave o't,
I am, &c.

Sae merrily the banes we'll pike,
Au' sun ourseles about the dyke,
Ae' at our leisure, when we like,
We'll whistle o'er the lave o't,
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
_Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms,
May whistle o'er the lave o't,
I am, &c.

RECIDATIVO.
Her charms had struck a sturdy Caird,
As weel as poor Gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a rusty rapier.—
He swore by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he would, from that time forth,
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace, wi' ruefu' face,
And so the quarrel ended
But though his little heart did grieve
When round the tinker press'd her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the Caird address'd her:

AIR.

*Tune—"Clout the Caudron."

My bonie lass I work in brass,
A tinker is my station;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation.
I've taen the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd, when aff I march'd
To go and clout the caudron.
    I've taen the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and cap'rin,
And tak a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup! my faith and houp,
And by that dear Kilbaigie!
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie!
    And by that stoup, &c.

* A peculiar sort of whisky so called, a great favourite with Poosie-Nansie's clubs.
The Caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
An' partly she was drunk.

Sir Violino, wi' an air
That show'd a man o' spunk,
Wish'd *unison* between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But urchin Cupid shot a shaft
That play'd a dame a shavie,
The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft
Behint the chicken-cavie.

Her lord, a wight o' Homer's* craft,
Tho' limpin wi' the spavie,
He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
And shor'd them dainty Davie
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade,
As ever Bacchus listed;
Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.

He had nae wish—but to be glad,
Nor want, but—when he thirsted!
He hated nought—but to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested

His sang that night:

---

* Homer is allowed to be the eldest ballad-singer on record.
AIR.

Tune—"For a' that, and a' that."

I am a Bard of no regard
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that;
But Homer like, the glowran' byke,
F'rae town to town I draw that.

Chorus.

For a' that and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife enough for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's hurn, and a' that;
But there it streams, and richly seams—
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to throw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet this hou'r we meet,
Wi' mutual love and a' that;
But for how lang the 'tie may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft have put me daft,
They've taen me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's the sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till' for a' that.
RECIPIATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook wi' a thunder of applause
Re-echo'd from each mouth:
They toom'd their pocks and pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowan drouth.
Then, owre again, the jovial thrang
The poet did request,
To lowse his pack, an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best:
He rising, rejoicing
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them,
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

Tune—"Jolly mortals fill your glasses."
See the smoking bowl before us!
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

Chorus.
A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where.
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the bay.
A fig, &c.
Does the train-attended carriage
Thro' the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum,
Who have Characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to a' the wand'ring train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out, Amen!
A fig, &c.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Gie him strong drink until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief an' care;
There let him bouse an' deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more.
Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.

Let other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drunken Bacchus,
An' crabit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scots bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.
O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch Drink,
Whether thro' wimplin worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn;
An' Aits set up their awnie horn,
An' Pease and Beans, at e'n or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumblin in the boilin flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin;
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin;
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down hill, scrievin,
Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.
Aft clad in massy siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
   The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
   Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
   By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
   Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reeking on a New-year morning
   In cog or bicker,
An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
   An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz au' freath
   I' th' lugget caup!
Then Burnewin* comes on like death
   At ev'ry chaup.

Nae mercy then for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,

* Burn-the-wind—the blacksmith.
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong fore-hammer,
Till block an' studie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name;
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drunken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.
Ye Scots wha wish auld Scotland well,
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel!
   It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter deearthfu' wines to mell,
   Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blether wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
   O' sour disdain,
Out-owre a glass o' whisky punch
   Wi' honest men.

O whisky! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
   Are my poor verses!
Thou comes!—they rattle i' their ranks
   At ither's a—s!

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland, lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, an' barkin hoast,
   May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
   Is taen awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' excise,
Wha mak the whiskey stells their prize!
Haud up thy hand, Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
   There, seize the blinkers!
Au' bake them up in brunstane pies
   For poor d—n'd drinkers.
Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whisky gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
   Tak a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNIEST CRY
AND PRAYER *

To the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons.

Dearest of distillation! last and best—
—How art thou lost!—
   Parody on Milton.

Ye Irish Lords, ye Knights an' Squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
'To you a simple Poet's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your Honours' heart wi' grief twad pierce,
To see her sitting on her a—e
   Low i' the dust,
An' screechin out prosaic verse,
   An' like to brust!

* This was written before the act anent the Scotch distilleries, of session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.
Tell them wha hae the chief direction, Scotland an' me's in great affliction, E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction On Aquavitæ; An' rouse them up to strong conviction, An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier Youth, The honest, open, naked truth: Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth, His servants humble: The muckle Devil blaw ye south, If ye dissemble!

Does ouie great man glunch an' gloom? Speak out, an' never fash your thumb! Let posts an' pensions sink or soom Wi' them wha grant 'em: If honestly they canna come, Far better want 'em.

In gath'ring votes you were na slack; Now stand as tightly by your tack; Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back, An' hum an' haw; But raise your arm, an' tell your crack Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle; Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle; An' d-mu'd Excisemen in a bussle, Seizin a stell, Triumphant crushin't like a mussel Or lampit shell.
Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard Smuggler right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow a chuffie Vintner,
   Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bear as winter
   Of a' kind coin.

Is there that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
   Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
   By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire an' out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
   Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
   An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honours, can ye see't,
The kind, auld cantie Carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
   An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot heat,
   Ye winna bear it!

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period, an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
   To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
   - Auld Scotland's wrangs.
MISCELLANIES.

Dempster, a true-blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran *;
An' that glib-gabbet Highland Baron,
    The Laird o' Graham †;
An' ane, a chap that's d-mn'd auldfarran,
    Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick, an' Ilay;
An' Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
    An' monie ither's,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
    Might own for brithers.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or, faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
    Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you wi' a reekin whittle,
    Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost Militia fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
    Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud,
    About her whisky.

An' L—d! if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt.

* Sir Adam Ferguson.
† The Duke of Montrose.
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,  
She'll tak the streets,  
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,  
I' the first she meets.

For G-d sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,  
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,  
An' to the muckle House repair,  
Wi' instant speed,  
An' strive, wi' a' your wit an' lear,  
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,  
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;  
But gie him't het, my heartie cocks!  
E'en cowe the caddie;  
An' send him to his dicing box  
An' sporting lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's,  
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,  
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's*,  
Nine times a week,  
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,  
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,  
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,

* A worthy old hostess of the Author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studies politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch Drink.
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
'The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
'To tak their part,
Though by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a minister grow dhorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honours a' your days
Wi' sowps o' kail an' brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes,
'That haunt Saint Jamie's!
Your humble Poet sings an' prays
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves, in warmer skies,
See future wines, rich-clust'ring, rise
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her free-born, martial boys
Tak aff their whisky.
What tho' their Phæbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves:

Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' pouther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swithe
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot!—they're aff a' throwther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me whiskey's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.
Scotland, my auld respected Mither!
Tho' whyles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
(Freedom and whiskey gang thegither!)
Tak aff your dram!

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.*

The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
An' hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whar she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin-tree
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And whan the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,

* Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of digressive poem. See his Cath-Loda.
That fill'd, wi' hoast provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae-thing,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank and clarkit,
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I henceforth, would be rhyme proof
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the snick did draw;
And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-love I saw,
Now bleezing bright,
A tight, outlandish Hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.
Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glow'rd as eerie's I'd been dush't
    In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
    And stepped ben.
    
Green, slender, leaf-clad *holly-boughs*
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
I took her for some *Scottish Muse,*
    By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
    Wou'd soon been broken.
    
A "hair-brain'd sentimental trace,"
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildy-witty, rustic grace
    Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
    Beam'd keen with Honour.
    
Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonie *Jean*
    Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
    Nane else came near it.
    
Her *Mantle* large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep *lights* and *shades*, bold-mingling, threw
    A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
    A well known land.
Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost;
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
    With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
    The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds;
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
    On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
    With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient Borough rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
    She boasts a race,
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
    And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
    I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
    With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a Race* heroic wheel,

* The Wallaces.
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
   In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
   Their Suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour*, mark him well;
Bold Richardton's†, heroic swell;
The chief on Sark‡ who glorious fell,
   In high command;
And He whom ruthless fates expel
   His native land.

There, where a scepter'd Pictish shade §
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
   In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
   They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove †,
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,

* William Wallace.
† Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish Independence.
‡ Wallace, laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.
§ Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomerics of Coil's-field, where his burial-place is still shown.
† Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice Clerk.
(Fit haunts for Friendship or for Love)
In musing mood,
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe
The learned Sire and Son I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a Patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fuir;
A whispering throb did witness bear,
Of kindred sweet,
When, with an elder sister's air,
She did me greet:—

* Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart.
† Colonel Fullarton.
All hail! my own inspired Bard!
In me thy native Muse regard:
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

Know, the great *Genius* of this land,
Has many a light, aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
    Harmoniously,
As Arts or arms they understand,
    Their labours ply.

They *Scotia's* race among them share;
Some fire the Soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the Patriot up to bare
    Corruption's heart;
Some teach the Bard, a darling care,
    The tuneful art.

'**Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,**
They ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or 'mid the venal Senate's roar,
    They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest Patriot-lore,
    And grace the hand.

And when the Bard, or hoary Sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
    In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
    Full on the eye.
Hence *Fullarton*, the brave and young;
Hence *Dempster's* zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious *Beattie* sung
His *Minstrel* lays;
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The *Sceptic's* bays.

To lower orders are assign'd,
The humbler ranks of human kind,
The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
The Artisan;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd train
Blythe o'er the hill.

Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some sooth the lab'r'er's weary toil
For humble gains,
And makes his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic Bard;
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.
Of these am I—Coila my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
    Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
    Thy natal hour.

With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
    In uncouth rhymes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
    Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
    Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar,
    Struck thy young eye.

Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
    In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
    With boundless love.

When ripen'd fields and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
    And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
    In pensive walk.
When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shiv'ring shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To sooth thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's madd'ning play,
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends:
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.
Then never murmur nor repine;  
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;  
And trust me, not Potosi's mine,  
Nor kings' regard,  
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,  
A rustic Bard.

To give my counsels all in one,  
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;  
Preserve the Dignity of Man,  
With soul erect;  
And trust the Universal Plan  
Will all protect.

And wear thou this!—she solemn said,  
And bound the Holly round my head.  
The polish'd leaves and berries red,  
Did rustling play;  
And, like a passing thought, she fled  
In light away.
A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely Dreams were ne'er indicted Treason.

[On reading in the public papers, the Laureat’s Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy made the following Address.]

I.

GUID-MORNIN to your Majesty!
May Heav’n augment your blisses,
On ev’ry new birth-day ye see,
A humble Poet wishes!
My Bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sac fine this day.

II.

I see ye’re complimented thrang,
By monie a lord and lady;
God save the king! ’s a cuckoo sang
That’s unco easy said ay;
The Poets too, a venal gang,
Wi’ rhymes weel-turn’d and ready,
Wad gar ye trow ye ne’er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.
III.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor;
So, nae reflexion on your grace,
Your kingship to be-spatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted;
But facts are chielst that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
And less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha in a barn or byre
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts you day.
VI.
And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaster;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

VII.
I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairge?)
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G-d sake! let nae saving-fit
Abridge your bonie barges
An' boats this day.

VIII.
Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.
IX.

Hail, Majesty most excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple Poet gies ye?
Thae bonie bairn-time, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X.

For you young Potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie,
By night or day.

XI.

Yet aft a ragged cowte's been known
To mak a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him* at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;

* King Henry V.
And yet, wi' funny queer Sir John *,
He was an unco shaver
    For monie a day.

XII.

For you, right rév'rend Osnaburg,
    Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
    Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
    That bears the keys of Peter,
Then swith! an' get a wife to hug,
    Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
    Some luckless day.

XIII.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, I learn,
    Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley†, stem an' stern,
    Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
    Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airm,
    An' large upo' her quarter,
    Come full that day.

* Sir John Falstaff. Vide Shakespeare.
† Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.
XIV.
Ye, lasty, bonie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant ay;
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want ay
On onie day.

XV.
God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautet:
But, ere the course o' life be thro',
It may be bitter sautet:
An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
That yet hae tarrow'd at it:
But & the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.
ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war. Milton.

O thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern, grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
And let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a Deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd and noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate, nor scaur.
Whyles ranging like a roaring lion
For prey, a' holes and corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-wings'd tempest flyin,
Tirling the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld, ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my graunie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortries comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light;
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my niece did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi'an eldritch stour, quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa' ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings.
Let *warlocks* grim, an' wither'd *hags*
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirm in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill:
An' dawtit, twal-pint *Hawkie's gaen*
As yell's the Bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thou'es dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jingling icy-boord,
Then *Water-helpies* haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing *Spunkies*
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.
When Masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to h-ll!

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' a' the soul of love they shar'd
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz,
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl,
Was warst ava?
But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechting fierce,
Sin' that day *Michael* did you pierce,
   Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
   In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld *Cloots*, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
   To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
   An' cheat you yet.

*But fare you weel auld *Nickie-ben*!*
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
   Still hae a *stake*—
I'm wae to think upon you den,
   Ev'n for your sake!

* Vide Milton, Book VI.*
ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

I.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

II.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy trade his labours plies;
There architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High yields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.
III.

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

IV.

Thy daughter's bright thy walks adorn!
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!
Fair *Burnet* strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine,
I see the *Sire of love on high*,
And own his work indeed divine!

V.

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold vet'ran, grey in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar;
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock;
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.
VI.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where *Scotia’s* kings of other years,
Fam’d heroes, had their royal home:
Alas! how chang’d the times to come;
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wand’ring roam!
Tho’ rigid law cries out, ’twas just!

VII.

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro’ hostile ranks and ruin’d gaps,
Old *Scotia’s* bloody lion bore:
Ev’n I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply *my sires* have left their shed,
And fac’d grim danger’s loudest roar,
Bold-following where *your* fathers led!

VIII.

*Edina!* *Scotia’s* darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow’rs,
Where once beneath a monarch’s feet
Sat legislation’s sov’reign pow’rs!
From marking wildly-scatter’d flow’rs,
As on the banks of *Ayr* I stray’d,
And singing, lone, the ling’ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour’d shade.
ADDRESS

TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

On crowning his Bust, at Ednam, Roxburghshire, with Bays.

While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
    Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
    Or tunes Eolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
    Retreats to Dryburg's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
    The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
    By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
    Each creature on his bounty fed:

While maniac winter rages o'er
    The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrents roar,
    Or sweeping wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the Year,
    Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia with exulting tear,
    Proclaims that Thomson was her son.
THE POET'S WELCOME

TO HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

Thou's welcome, wean, mishanter fa' me,
If ought of thee or of thy mammy,
Shall ever danton me or awe me,
   My sweet wee lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
   Tit-ta or daddy.

Wee image of my bonie Betty,
I, fatherly, will kiss an' daut thee,
As dear an' near my heart I set thee
   Wi' as gude will
As a' the priests had seen me get thee
   That's out o' h-ll.

What tho' they ca' me fornicator,
An' tease my name in kintry-clatter:
The mair they tauk I'm kent the better,
   E'en let them clash;
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
   To gie ane fash.

Sweet fruit o' monie a merry dint,
My funny toil is now a' tint,
Sin' thou came to the warl' asklent,
   Which fools may scoff at;
In my last plack thy part's be in't—
   The better half o't.
An' if thou be what I wad hae thee,
An' tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
A lovin' father I'll be to thee,
    If thou be spared;
Thro' a' thy childish years I'll e'e thee,
    An' think't weel war'd.

Gude grant that thou may ay inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, an' merit,
An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
    Without his failins,
'Twill please me mair to hear an' see't
Than stocket mailins.

TO A HAGGIS.

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
    Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
    As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
    In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.
His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reeking rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost! on they drive
Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums,
Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad make her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle-shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, Haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.
Ye Pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a Haggis!

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang;
And thro' my lugs gies monie a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Ay mock's our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle
To see me loup;
White, raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup.
O' a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'sts, daft bargains, *cutty-stools*,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
    Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
    Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
    In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Tooth-ache, surely bear'ost the bell
    Amang them a'!

O thou grim, mischief-making Chiel,
That gars the notes of *discord* squeel,
Till daft mankind.aft dance a reel
    In gore a shoe-thick;
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
    A Towmond's Tooth-ache!

TO A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISTRESS.

*Sweet* flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' monie a pray'r,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, *sweet*, and fair!
November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill, on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn:
Now, feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by Russian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!
TO

A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH,
IN APRIL, 1786.

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou'st met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
    Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
    Thou bonie gem.

Alas! its no thy neebor sweet!
The bonie Lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
    Wi' spreckled breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
    The purpling East.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting North
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
    Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
    Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
    Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty maótle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
    In humble guise;
But now the share up-tears thy bed,
    And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
    And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
    Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
    Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
    And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driven,
    To mis'ry's brink,
'Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
    He, ruin'd, sink!
Ev'n thou who mourns't the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST, WITH THE PLough, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bick'rin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which mäks thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve:
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
's a sma' request:
I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never miss’t.

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.
Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
    On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
    I guess an' fear.

LINES
ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL IN LOCH TURIT,

A wild Scene among the Hills of Ouchtertyre.

Why, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunt forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or beneath the shel't'ring rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle from the clifffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But Man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from pitying Heav'n,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if Man's superior might,
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow'rs you scorn;
Swiftly seek on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.
SONNET

WRITTEN ON THE 25th OF JANUARY, 1783, THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE AUTHOR,

On hearing a Thrush in a Morning Walk.

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain;
See aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrow'd brow:

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light, unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come thou child of Poverty and Care;
The mite high Heav'n bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.
VERSES

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME, WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye:
May never Pity sooth thee with a sigh,
Nor ever Pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go, live, poor wand'rer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains:
No more the thick'ning brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangl'd wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The shelt'ring rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.
THE

AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,

On giving her the accustomed Ripp of Corn to Hansel in the New Year.

A GUID NEW-YEAR I wish thee, Maggie! Hae there's a ripp to thy auld baggie; Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie, I've seen the day Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy, An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy, I've seen thee dappl'd, sleek, and glaizie, A bonie gray: He should been tight that daur't to raise thee, Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank, A filly, buirdly, steeve, an' swank, An' set well down a shapely shank, As e'er tread yird; An' could hae flown out-owre a stank, Like onie bird.
Its now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride;
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
*Kyle Stewart* I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
An' wintel like a saumont-cobble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran and stood a'beigh,
An' ca't thee mad.
When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou paid them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter-cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles, thou try't their mettle
An' gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fecht, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy wee-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith and pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang an' snaus were deep,
An threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I kenn'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.
In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac’d it:
Thou never lap, and sten’t, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov’t awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a’:
Four gallant brutes as e’er did draw:
Forbye sax mae I’ve sell’t awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an’ twa,
The very warst.

Monie a sair darg we twa hae wrought,
An’ wi’ the weary warl’ fought!
An’ monie an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we’re brought
Wi’ something yet.

An’ think na, my auld trusty servan’,
That now perhaps thou’s less deservin,
An’ thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fou,
A heapet stimpart, I’ll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We’ve worn to crazy years thegither;
We’ll toyte about wi’ ane anither;
Wi’ tentie care I’ll flit thy tether,
To some hain’d rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi’ sma’ fatigue.
THE

DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

An unco mournfu' Tale.

As Mailie an' her lambs thegither
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying she did lie,
When Hughoc* he came doytin by.

Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But waes my heart! he could na mend it!
He gaping wide, but naething spak!
At length poor Mailie silence brak:

O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!

* A neighbour herd callan.
My dying words attentive hear,
And bear them to my Master dear.

Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

Tell him he was a Master kin',
An' ay was guid to me and mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel:
An' tent them duly, e'en and morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' rips o' corn.

An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile wanrestfu' pets!
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave, an' steal,
At stacks o' pease or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the shears:
So wives wil gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.
My poor *toop-lamb*, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An', if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him, what I winna name,
'To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menteless, graceless brutes.

An' niest my *yowie*, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' onie blastit, moorland toop;
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your Mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

Now, honest *Hughoc*, dinna fail,
'To tell my Master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou's get my blether.

This said, poor *Mailie* turn'd her head,
An' clos'd her een amang the dead.
POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY:

**LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,**
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cap-stane of his woes;
Poor *Mailie's* dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In *Mailie* dead.

Thro' a' the town she trolled by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than *Mailie* dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence
Thro' thievish greed;
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' *Mailie's* dead.
Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her youe,
Comes bleating to him, o'er the knowe,
   For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
   For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tauted ket an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
   Frae 'yont the Tweed;
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
   Than Mailie dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile wanchaucie thing—a rape!
It maks guide fellows girn an' gape;
   Wi' chockin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
   For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
   O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon
   His Mailie dead!
I.

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

II.

The lightly-jumping glowrin' trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whit'ning stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

* Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.
III.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That, to a Bard, I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Ev'n as I was he shor'd me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

IV.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well
As nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

V.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonie spreading bushes;
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen monie a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.
VI.

The sober lav’rock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, music’s gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow:

VII.

This too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow’rs;
Or find a shelt’ring, safe retreat,
From prone descending show’rs.

VIII.

And here, by sweet, endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising world’s with all their wealth
As empty, idle care.
The flow’rs shall vie in all their charms,
The hour of heav’n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms,
To screen the dear embrace.
IX.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing Bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequ'ring thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

x.

Let lofty firs and ashes cool
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed:
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

XI.

So may, old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may thro', Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—Athole's honest men,
And Athole's buvie lasses!
THE BRIGS OF AYR.

INSCRIBED TO J. BALLANTYNE, ESQ. AYR.

The simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy Independence bravely bred,
By early Poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field;
Shall he be guilty of their hirling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward!
Still, if some patron's gen'rous care he trace,
Skill'd, in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When Ballantyne befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The god-like bliss, to give, alone excels.

’Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-worn crap;
Potatoe-bings are snugged up frae skaith
Of coming Winter’s bitting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o’er their summer toils,
Unnumber’d buds, an’ flowers’ delicious spoils,
Seal’d up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom’d by man, that tyrant o’er the weak,
The death o’ devils smoor’d wi’ brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on ev’ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather’d field-mates, bound by Nature’s tie.
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man’s savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flow’r in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except perhaps the Robin’s whistling glee,
Proud o’ the height o’ some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noon-tide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

’Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity’s reward;
Ae night, within the ancient burgh of Ayr,
By whim inspir’d, or haply press’d wi’ care;
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's * wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why:)
The drowsy Dungeon-clock † had numbered two,
And Wallace Tow'r † had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore,
All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clanging sugh of whistling wings he heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the Gos‡ drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th' Auld Brig his hairy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo o' the sp'ritual folk;)

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.
† The two steeples.
‡ The gos hawk, or falcon.
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,  
And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)  
_Auld Brig_ appear'd of ancient Pictish race,  
The vera wrinkles gothic in his face:  
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,  
Yet teughly doure, he bade an unco bang.  
_New Brig_ was buskit in a braw new coat,  
That he, at _Lon' on_, frae _ane Adams_, got;  
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,  
_Wi' _virls and whirlygigums at the head.  
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,  
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;  
It chanc'd his new-come ueebor took his e'e,  
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!  
_Wi' _thieveless sneer to see his modish main,  
He, down the water, gies him this guide'en:—

_Auld Brig._

_I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,  
Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank!  
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,  
Tho' faith that day, I doubt, ye'll never see;  
There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a bodle,  
Some fewer whigmeleeries in your noodle._

_NEW BRIG._

_Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,  
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;_
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa weel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin’d, formless bulk o’ stane an’ lime,
Compare wi’ bonie *Brigs* o’ modern time?
There’s men o’ taste would take the *Duckat stream*,
Tho’ they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi’ the view
Of sic an ugly, gothic hulk as you.

**AULD BRIG.**

Conceited gowk! puff’d up wi’ windy pride!
This monie a year I’ve stood the flood an’ tide;
And tho’ wi’ crazy eild I’m sair forfairn,
I’ll be a *Brig* when ye’re a shapeless cairn;
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued a’-day rains,
Wi’ deepening deluges o’erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling
*Coil,*
Or stately *Lugar*’s mossy fountains boil,
Or where the *Greenock* winds his moorland course,
Or haunted *Garpal* + draws his feeble source,
Arous’d by blust’ring winds an’ spoting thowes,
In monie a torrent down his sna-broo rowes;

* A noted ford just above the *Auld Brig.*

† The banks of *Garpal Water* is one of the few places in the west of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of *Ghaists*, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.
MISCELLANIES.

While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck *, down to the Ratton-key †,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl—deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumliejaups up to the pouring skies:
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture! 'tworth, I needs must say't o't
The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
Gaunt, gastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er-arching, mouldy; gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
Windows and doors in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam-statuary's dream,
The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason, reptile, bird or beast;
Fit only for a doited monkish race,
Or frosty maids, forsworn the dear embrace,

* The source of the river Ayr.
† A small landing place above the large quay.
Or cuifs of latter times, wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling, true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Burgh denies protection,
And soon may they expire, unbless'd with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy Proveses, an' mony a Bailie,
Wha in the paths of righteousness did toil ay;
Ye dainty Deacons, and ye douce Conveeners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
Ye godly Councils wha hae bless'd this town;
Ye godly Brethren of the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gae your hurdies to the smiters;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers:
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would you say or do?
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degenerate race!
Nae langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story;
Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house;
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
MISCELLANIES.

Men, three-parts made by Tailors and by Barbers,  
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d—d new  
Brigs and Harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,  
And muckle mair than ye can make to through.  
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,  
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle:  
But under favour o' your langer beard,  
Abuse o' magistrates might weel be spar'd:  
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,  
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.  
In Ayr, Wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle  
To mouth ' a Citizen,' a term o' scandal:  
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,  
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;  
Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins;  
Or gather'd lib'ral views in bonds and seisins.  
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,  
Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp,  
And would to Common-sense, for once betray'd them,  
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,  
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,  
No man can tell; but all before their sight,  
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glitt’ring stream they featly danc’d; 
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc’d: 
They footed o’er the wat’ry glass so neat, 
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet: 
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung, 
And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung. 
O had M’Lauchlan*, thairm-inspiring sage, 
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage, 
When through his dear Strathspeys they bore 
with Highland rage; 
Or when they struck old Scotia’s melting airs, 
The lover’s raptur’d joys or bleeding cares; 
How would his Highland lug been nobler fir’d, 
And ev’n his matchless hand with finer touch 
inspir’d! 
No guess could tell what instrument appear’d, 
But all the soul of Music’s self was heard; 
Harmonious concert rung in every part, 
While simple melody pour’d moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears, 
A venerable Chief advanc’d in years; 
His hoary head with water-lilies crown’d, 
His manly leg with garter-tangle bound, 
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring, 
Sweet female Beauty hand in hand with Spring; 
Then crown’d with flow’ry hay, came Rural Joy, 
And Summer, with his servid-beaming eye; 
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn, 
Led yellow Autumn wreath’d with nodding corn;

* A well known performer of Scottish music on the violin.
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow.
Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form*, came from the tow'r of Stair;
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine†, their long-lov'd abode;
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instrument of Death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

LINES

WRITTEN, WITH A PENCIL, STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS, NEAR LOCHNESS.

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,

* Mrs. Stewart.
† See the first note in p. 144.
Prone down the rock the whit'ning sheet descends,
And viewless Echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
Dim seen, tho' rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'rs.
Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
An still, below, the horrid cauldron boils—

LINES

WRITTEN, WITH A PENCIL, OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE.

In the Parlour of the Inn at Kenmore, Taymouth

Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
These northen scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till fam'd Breadalbane opes to my view.—
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample sides;
Th' outstretched lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace rising on his verdant side;
The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste;
The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste;
The arches striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the noon-tide beam—
Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone, wand’ring by the hermit’s mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
Th’ incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

Here Poesy might wake her heav’n-taught lyre,
And look thro’ Nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil’d,
Misfortune’s lighten’d steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to sooth her bitter, rankling wounds:
Here heart-struck Grief might heav’nward stretch her scan,
And injur’d Worth forget and pardon man.

INSCRIPTION

FOR AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE,

At Kerroughty, the Seat of Mr Heron, written in Summer,
1795.

Thou of an independent mind,
With soul resolv’d, with soul resign’d;
Prepar’d Pow’r’s proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be nor have a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.
ON PASTORAL POETRY.

Hail, Poesie! thou Nymph reserv'd!
In chace o' thee what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And och! o'er aft thy joes hae starv'd,
'Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud, the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang,
   To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang,
   But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, till him 'rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
   Ev'n Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus! wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches:
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin patches
O' Heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
   That ape their betters.
In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
   And rural grace;
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian, share
   A rival place;

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan!
There's ane; come forrit honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behind the hallan,
   A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tumtallan,
   But thou's for ever.

Thou paints auld Nature to the nines*,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines:
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
   Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
   Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonie lasses bleach their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
   Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
   At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are Nature's sel;
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;

* Exactly.
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin love,
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

ON THE LATE

CAPTAIN GROSE'S

Peregrinations Through Scotland, Collecting
The Antiquities of That Kingdom.

Hear Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnie Groat's;
If there's a hole in a your coats,
    I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you takin notes,
    And, faith he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
    That's he, mark weel—
And vow! he has an unco slight
    O' cauk and keel.
By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin*,
Or kirk deserted by its riggen,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' Deils they say, L—d safe's! colleaguin
At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or cham'er,
Ye gipsey gang that deal in glamor,
And you deep-read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer
Ye midnight b—es!

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n then fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And taen the Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a south o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets†,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmond guid;
An parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
And Tubal-Cain's fire-shool and fender;

* Vide his Antiquities of Scotland.
† Vide his Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons.
That which distinguished the gender
  O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the Witch of Endor,
  Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,
The cut of Adam's philibeg;
The knife that nicket Abel's craig
  He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
  Or lang kail gullie.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
  Guid fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
  And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the pow'rs o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose!
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
  They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
  Wad say, Shame fa' thee!
LINES

ON AN INTERVIEW WITH LORD DAER.

This wot ye all whom it concerns,
I Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
   October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I spreckled up the brae,
   I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests,
   Wi' rev'rense be it spoken;
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
   Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord—stand out my shin,
A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son,
   Up higher yet, my bonnet;
And sic a Lord—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage, he o'erlooks them a'
   As I look o'er my sonnet!
But oh for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
   And how he star'd and stammer'd,
When goavan, as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpin on his ploughman shanks,
   He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sliding shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his Lordship steal't a look
   Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense and social glee,
An' (what surprised me) modesty,
   I marked nought uncommon.

I watched the symptoms of the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
   The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
   Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
   One rank as well's another;
Nae honest, worthy man need care,
To meet with noble, youthful Daer,
   For he but meets a brother.
SACRED PIECES.

A PRAYER,

LEFT IN A ROOM OF A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE, WHERE THE AUTHOR SLEPT.

O Thou, dread Pow'r, who reign'st above! I know thou wilt me hear; When for this scene of peace and love, I make my pray'r sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke, Long, long, be pleas'd to spare! To bless his little filial flock, And shew what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes With tender hopes and fears, O bless her with a mother's joys, But spare a mother's tears!
Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush;
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
- Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
Guide thou their steps alway!

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in heav'n!

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH:

O Thou, great Being! what thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey thy high behest.
Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear and not repine!

---

A PRAYER,

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O Thou, unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast
Remonstrates I have done.

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.
Where human weakness has come so
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But Thou art good; and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I.

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between;
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms;
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

II.

Fain would I say, Forgive my foul offence!
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray:
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heav'nly mercy pray?
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

III.
O thou, great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong, furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line;
O, aid me with thy help, Omnipo\n\n\nA GRACE BEFORE DINNER.

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want!
We bless thee, God of Nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent:

And, if it please thee, heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content.

\textit{Amen.}
THE FIRST PSALM.

The man in life, wherever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt,
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? That God, the good adore,
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.
THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH PSALM.

O Thou, the first, the greatest Friend Of all the human race! Whose strong right-hand has ever been Their stay and dwelling-place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads Beneath thy forming hand, Before this pond'rous globe itself, Arose at thy command:

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds This universal frame, From countless, unbeginning time Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years Which seem to us so vast, Appear no more before thy sight Than yesterday that's past.
Thou giv'st the word: thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought:
Again, thou sayest, Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

VERSES

WRITTEN IN FRIAR'S-CARSE HERMITAGE, ON NITH-SIDE.

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul:

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always low'r.
As youth and love, with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning-star advance,
Pleasure, with her syren air,
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease:
There, ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, Man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal Nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heaven,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.
Say, To be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life—future no more,
To light and joy the good restore—
To light and joy unknown before!

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman of Nith-side.
EJULATIONS.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN,

A DIRGE.

I.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'n, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

II.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
(Began the rev'rend sage)
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man!
III.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

IV.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mispending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

V.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.
VI.

A few seem favourites of Fate,
   In Pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
   Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in ev'ry land,
   Are wretched and forloru;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
   That man was made to mourn.

VII.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
   Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
   Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
   The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
   Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII.

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
   So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
   To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
   The poor. petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
   And helpless offspring mourn.
IX.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
   By Nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
   E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
   His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
   To make his fellow mourn?

X.

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
   Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human kind
   Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
   Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompence
   To comfort those that mourn!

XI.

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend!
   The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
   Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
   From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, oh! a blest relief to those
   That weary-laden mourn!
DESPONDENCY,

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I sit me down and sigh:
O Life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim, backward, as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

II.

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same,
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

III.

How blest the Solitary's lot!
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild, with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
'A faint collected dream:
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to Heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

IV.

Then I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop and just to move,
With self-respecting art:
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The Solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here, must cry here,
At perfidy ingrate!

v.

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim, declining age!
TO RUIN.

I.

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou, grim Pow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink, appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throb's cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace!

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pityless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?—

Shakespeare.

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow' r
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirlin drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-chocked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.
List'ning, the doors and winnocks rattle
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
   O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
   Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
   What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chitt'ring wing,
   And close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone, from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
   My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
   Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, view'd the dreary plain:
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
   Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
   Slow, solemn stole—

Blow, blow, ye winds with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heav’n-illumin’d man on brother man bestows!

See stern Oppression’s iron grip,
Or mad ambition’s gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o’er a land!

Ev’n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper’d luxury, flattery by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o’er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt’ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin’d,
Plac’d for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

Where, where is love’s fond, tender throe,
With lordly honour’s lofty brow,
The pow’rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath love’s noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!

Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of her tears, and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps, this hour, in misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think for a moment on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!

Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting, view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel Fortune's undeserved blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!

I heard nae mair, for chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.
EJULATIONS.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Thro' all his works abroad,
The heart, benevolent and kind,
The most resembles God.

THE LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet Affection prove the spring of woe!

I.
O thou pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

II.
I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill.
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!  
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!  
Ah! must the agonizing thrill  
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,  
My sad love-born lamentings claim;  
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;  
No fabl'd tortures, quaint and tame:  
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;  
The oft attested Powers above;  
The promis'd father's tender name—  
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,  
How have the raptur'd moments flown!  
How have I wish'd for Fortune's charms,  
For her dear sake, and her's alone!  
And must I think it! Is she gone,  
My secret heart's exulting boast?  
And does she heedless hear my groan?  
And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,  
So lost to honour, lost to truth,  
As from the fondest lover part,  
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn that warns th' approaching day;
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly Thief:
Or, if I slumber, Fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief
From such a horror-breathing night!

IX.

O thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observe'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never, to return!
Scenes, if, in stupor, I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn:
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.
LAMENT,

WRITTEN WHEN THE AUTHOR WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.

I.
O'er the mist-shrouded cliffs of the lone mountain straying,
Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave,
What woes wring my heart while intently surveying
The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave.

II.
Ye foam-crested billows, allow me to wail,
Ere ye toss me afar from my lov'd native shore;
Where the flower which bloom'd sweetest in Coila's green vale,
The pride o' my bosom, my Mary's no more.

III.
No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
And smile at the moon's rimpl'd face in the wave;
No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
For the dew drops of the morning fall cold on her grave.

IV.
No more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast,
I haste with the storm to a far distant shore;
Where, unknown, un lamented, my ashes shall rest,
And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.

LAMENT

FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

I.
The wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewaild his lord,
Whom death had all untimely taen.
II.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whosetrunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white wi' time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To Echo bore the notes alang.

III.

Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques of the vernal choir!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

IV.

I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hald of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ither plant them in my room.
I've seen sae monie changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake! resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from Fortune's mirkest gloom.
VIII.

In poverty's low barren vale,
   Thick mists, obscure, involv'd me round;
Tho' oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
   Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me like the morning sun
   That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless Bard and rustic song,
   Became alike thy fostering care.

IX.

Oh! why has worth so short a date?
   While villains ripen grey with time!
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
   Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime?
Why did I live to see that day?
   A day to me so full of woe!
Oh! had I met the mortal shaft
   Which laid my benefactor low!

X.

The bridegroom may forget the bride
   Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
   That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
   That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
   And a' that thou hast done for me!
LAMENT

OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

I.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
   On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
   Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phoebus cheers the crystal streams,
   And glads the azure skies;
But nocht can glad the weary wight
   That fast in durance lies.

II.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
   Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
   Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis mild, wi' many a note,
   Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
   Wi' care nor thrall opprest.
III.
Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison straeg.

IV.
I was the Queen o' bonie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly raise I in the morn,
As blythe the lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And monie a traitor there:
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

V.
But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim Vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae:
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.
VI.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep the frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

VII.

Oh! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house, o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.
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