THE LIFE AND DEATH OF RAB HA.

THE GLASGOW GLUTTON,

WITH

AN ELEGY

WRITTEN BY

William Cameron,

(Alias "Hawkie."

GLASGOW,

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We understand that Robert Hall was found dead on Wednesday last, in a hay-loft in Thistle Street, Hutchesontown, belonging to Mr Whitelaw, who for some time past has kindly permitted the vagrant to shelter himself there from the inclemencies of the season. Rab is only deserving of notice in so far as he was known for his eccentric habits, and his vast animal or gastronomic powers, to almost every individual in the West of Scotland. Although originally, we believe,
a farm servant or agricultural labourer, Rab speedily abandoned settled employment for the idle roysterling life of a vagrant, and became one of the most perfect specimens of the big beggarman which Scotland could produce. Powerful in frame, and of unbounded capacity of stomach, Rab wandered over all the west country, and was rarely absent from horse-race, fox-hunt, or coursing, for which he had a natural taste; but he delighted in these meetings more from the unlimited quantities of meat and drink which were supplied to him occasionally by those who knew his failing or ruling passion and were anxious to see how much the man could devour. Nothing pleased Rab more than when any party foolishly took up a bet on his eating qualities, and it is said that those who staked their money on his powers were rarely the losers. Glasgow was generally his head-quarters, and so long as he had the liberty of throwing his limbs to rest in any stable or straw house, his utmost ambition as to lodgings was satisfied. Rab was a great admirer of the pugilistic art, but he had no great notion for fighting himself; and beyond the appetite to gratify desires little above those of the brute, we are not aware
that the man had much ill in him. His death was in keeping with such a life, for having tumbled into his lair in a state of intoxication, there is little doubt that he was smothered amongst the straw.

Rab was known by almost every person in the west of Scotland for his eccentricity of manners and appearance he being generally clothed in rags, made up of three, and sometimes four, pair of trousers, with as many jackets. It is stated that various wagers were won by various noblemen and gentlemen by Ha's voracious appetite, and he was a great favourite amongst them, frequently getting his victuals at their houses.

On one occasion, Rab being on a trip to Rothsay, upon his return home, two gentlemen undertook a wager that Rab would eat seven pound of ship biscuit! Rab no sooner heard of this treat than he commenced work, but the biscuit proving too hard for his jaws, he was obliged to give over after having eaten about four pounds of them; however, the gentleman betting upon the appetite of Rab knew the bottom of his stomach better than to lose his money in that way. Rab being a little chagrined at his
defeat with the biscuit, said, that if the gentlemen were agreeable to double the bets, he would sup a peck of oatmeal made into brose. After asking him if he was full with eating the biscuit? he said he was not, but only he felt his jaws sore with cracking it, heset to work with the brose, and finished them in admirable style, leaving nothing but the empty cog. We think, upon the whole, that this feed was pretty considerable.

On another occasion, while lounging about the Broomielaw, he went into a house for a drink or water; as the woman happened to have none in the house at the time, she requested Rab to take a seat till she would return with some from a neighbouring well. During her absence, Rab was busily engaged in demolishing a stone of potatoes which the poor woman had made ready for herself and family, and on being questioned by the woman, he said he was very dry and he thought the potatoes would quench his outh.

Shortly afterwards, being about Hawkhead House, where there was a party of gentlemen wishing a little amusement, they thought fit to try Rab with another gorge;
L—K——, who was present, acquainted Rab that he had taken up a bet with another gentleman that he would eat a Calf. Without acquainting him in what manner it was to be cooked, Rab said he would do his endeavour. K—— having ordered the calf to be baked up in pies, after they were ready, he said to Rab that he might partake of a pie till the calf would be ready. One pie came in after another, till he had devoured the whole calf with the exception of one pie. He was then told him to eat that one also; when Rab bawled out, "K——, Lo'd I canna dae that, ye ken, the calf's to come yet."

If we were to insert all the anecdotes concerning this eccentric character they would fill a volume, we must therefore, commence the melancholy part of our story:—On Martinmas Wednesday, November 22, a number of Rab's acquaintances from the country gave him several dozes of meat and drink, in which he indulged rather freely. Late in the evening he was seen making his way along Stockwell Street bridge, towards Hutchisontown, in a state of inebriety, where he found shelter in the hay loft alluded to, and carried to the Police Office, there to a-
wait farther investigation. It is supposed that he died partly by the drink he had swallowed, and partly by suffocation. Thus ended the career of poor Rab. He died as he lived, in the midst of gluttony and intemperance; and we can only lament that the man should have ever given himself up to such sensual appetites.

The following is an Elegy, written by W. Cameron, (alias Hawkie) on the occasion.

E L E G Y.

Ye Glasgow folks, baith ane an' a',
Look sad, and let a tear doon la',
For your big glutton, Rabbie Ha',
   Is noo no more;
His soul's winged from a stable-la't
   To anither a'ore.

Rab, by profession, foolery feign'd,
For that the wretch eou'd not be blam'd,
Rab's character a glutton claim'd,
   Beef, scone, or bannock;
A calf devouring a' at ance,
   Ne'er turn'd his stamack.
Ye western swells, baith ane and a',
Lord Kel—n' noo come frae your ha',
In mournfu' weeds lament the ca'n.
Took puir Rab's bane;
The epicures may hide their head
When they hear his name.

Ae simmer morning, ere the sun
The aught hour clock had scarcely rung,
The Briggate bakers they've aft sung
Rab's glorious taster,
Six pints o' milk and ninety scones
Was his digester.

Ye wights o' the ither side o' Styx,
Charon on that river claims his rights,
And so will Rab wi' a' his might,
Baith drunk an' sober;
He'll toom your pantries day and night,
Fate Sept'ember t' October.

Ye fairies, kelpies, ane an' a',
Ye maister deils, baith great an' sma',
Be sure and watch oor Rabbie Ha',
And guide him weel,
Or else your bannocks he'll mak' sma',
And pinch your meal.