

CHEAP TRACTS, N^o. 2.

SCOTLAND'S SKAITH;
OR, THE
SAD EFFECTS
OF
DRUNKENNESS.

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE
HISTORY OF WILL AND JEAN.

' O' a' the ills p^oor Caledonia
' E'er yet p^{re}ed, or e'er will taste
' Brew'd in hell's black Pand^emonia,
' Whisky's ill will skaith her maist!



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THE
HISTORY OF WILL & JEAN

Wha was ance like Willie Gaillace,
Wha in neebouring town or farm?
Beauty's bloom was in his fair face,
Deadly strength was in his arm.

Wha wi Will could rin or wrastle,
Throw the sledge or toss the bar,
Hap what would, he stood a castle
Or for safety or for war.

Warm his heart, and mild as mansu,
Wi the bauld he bauld could be;
But to friends wha had their handfu,
Purse and service aye war free.

Whan he first saw Jeanie Miller,
Wha wi Jeanie could compare?
Thousands had mair brows and siller,
But war only half sae fair.

Kind and gentle was her nature;
At ilk place she bore the bell:
Sic a bloom, and shape, and stature!
But her look nae tongue can tell!

Sic was Jean, whan Will first mawing
 Spied her on a thraward beast,
 Flew like fire, and, just when fa'ing,
 Kept her on his manly breast.

Light he bare her, pale as ashes,
 Cross the meadow fragrant, green,
 Placed her on the new mown rashes,
 Watching sad her opening een.

Sic was Will, when poor Jean, fainting,
 Drapt into a lover's arms;
 Wakened to his saft lamenting,
 Sighed and blushed a thousand charms.

Soon they loo'd, and soon war buckl'd,
 Nane took time to think and rue:
 Youth, and worth, and beauty, coupled,
 Luve had never less to do.

Three short years flew by fu canty,
 Jean and Will thought them but ane;
 Ilka day brought joy and plenty,
 Ilka year a dainty wean.

Will wrought sair, but aye wi' pleasure;
 Jean the hale day span and sang;
 Will and weans her constant treasure,
 Blest wi them, nae day seemed lang.

Trig her house, and oh! to busk aye
 Ilk sweet bairn was a' her pride,
 But at this time NEWS and WHISKY
 Sprang nae up at ilk road side.

Luckless was the hour when Willie,
 Hame returning frae the fair,
 O'ertook Tam, a neebour billie,
 Sax miles frae their hame and mair.

Simmer's heat had lost its fury;
 Calmly smiled the sober e'en,
 Lasses on the bleachfield hurry,
 Skelping barefit owre the green.

Labour rang wi laugh and clatter,
 Canty hairst was just begun,
 And on mountain, tree, and water,
 Glinted saft the setting sun.

Will and Tam, wi hearts a' louping,
 Markt the hale, but could nae bide;
 Far frae hame, nae time for stopping,
 Baith wished for their ain fire side.

On they travelled, warm and drouthy,
 Cracking owre the news in town;
 The mair they crackt, the mair ilk youth aye
 Prayed for drink to wash news down.

Fortune, wha but seldom listens
 To poor Merit's modest prayer,
 And on fools pouts needless blessings,
 Harkened to our drouthy pair.

In a howm, wha's bonny burnie
 Whimpering rowed its crystal flood,
 Near the road whar travellers turn aye,
 Neat and bield a cot-house stood:

White the wa's wi roof new theekit,
 Window broads just painted red ;
 Lown'mang trees and braes it reekit,
 Haffins seen and haffins hid.

Down below a flowery meadow
 Joined the burnie's winding line ;—
 Here it was that Howe the widow
 That same day set up her sign.

Brattling down the brae, and near its
 Bottom, Will first marvelling sees,
 " PORTER, ALE, & BRITISH SPIRITS,"
 Painted bright between twa trees.

Huzza, Tam ! here's walth for drinking :
 Wha can this new comer be ?
 Hout, quo Tam, there's drouth in thinking ;
 Let's in, Will, and syne we'll see.

Nae mair time they took to speak or
 Think of ought hut reaming jugs,
 Till three times in humming liquor,
 Ilk lad deeply laid his lugs.

Slockened now, refreshed and talking ;
 In cam Meg (weel skilled to please),
 Sirs, ye're surely tired wi walking,—
 Ye maun taste my bread and cheese.

Thanks, quo Will, I canna tarry,
 Pick-mirk night is setting in ;
 Jean, puir thing's her lane and eery—
 I maun to the road and rin.

Hout, quo Tam, what's a' the hurry?
 Hame's now scarce a mile of gate—
 Come, sit down, Jean winna wearie;
 Hout, I'm sure its no sae late.

Will, owrecome wi Tam's oration,
 Baith fell to and ate their fill;
 Tam, quo Will, in mere discretion,
 We maun hae the widow's gill.

After ae gill cam anither—
 Meg sat cracking 'tween them twa;
 Bang cam in Mat Smith and's brither,
 Geordie Brown and Sandie Shaw.

Neebours wha ne'er thought to meet here,
 Now sat down wi double glee,
 Ilk gill aye grew sweet and sweeter,
 Will gat hame 'tween twa and three.

Jean, puir thing, had lang been greeting;
 Will, niest morning, blamed Tam Lowes.
 But ere lang an owkly meeting
 Was set-up at Maggie Howe's.

Maist thing hae a sma beginning,
 But wha kens how things will end?
 Owkly clubs are nae great sinning,
 Gin folk hae enough to spend.

But nae man of sober thinking
 E'er will say that things can thrive,
 If there's spent in owkly drinking
 What keeps wife and weans alive.

Drink maun aye hae conversation,
 Ilka social soul allows ;
 But in this reforming nation
 Wha can speak without the News?

Maggie's club, wha could get nae light
 On some things that should be clear,
 Found e'er lang the fault, and ae night
 Clubb'd and gat the GAZETTEER.

Twice a week to Maggie's cot-house
 Swith by post the papers fled ;
 Thoughts spring up like plants in hot-house
 Every time the news are read.

Ilk ane's wiser than anither,—
 Things are no gaun right, quo Tam,
 Let us aftener meet thegither,
 Twice a owk's no worth the gaun.

See them now in grave convention,
 To mak a' things square and even,
 Or at least wi firm intention
 To drink six nights out o' seven.

'Mid this sitting up and drinkings,
 Gathering a' the news that fell,
 Will, wha wasna yet past thinking,
 Had some battles wi himsel.

On ae hand, drink's deadly poison
 Bare ilk firm resolvé awa ;
 On the ither, Jean's condition
 Rave his very heart in twa.

Weel he saw her smothered sorrow,
 Weel he saw her bleaching cheek;
 Marked the smile she strave to borrow,
 Whan, poor thing, she couldna speak.

Jean, at first, took little heed o'
 Owkly clubs 'mang three or four,
 Thought, kind soul, that Will had need o'
 Heartsome hours when wark was owre.

But whan now that nightly meetings,
 Sat and drank frae sax till twa,
 When she found that hard earned gettings
 Now on drink war thrown awa;

Saw her Will, wha ance fae cheery
 Raife ilk morning wi the lark,
 Now grown mauchless, dowf, and swear aye
 To look near his farm or wark;

Saw him tyne his manly spirit,
 Healthy bloom and sprightly ee;
 And of love and hame grown wearit,
 Nightly frae his family flee;

Wha could blame her heart's complaining;
 Wha condemn her forrows meek,
 Or the tears that now ilk e'ening
 Bleached her lately crimsoned cheek?

Will, wha lang had rued and swithered,
 (Aye ashamed of past disgrace);
 Marked the roses as they withered
 Fast on Jeanie's lovely face.

Marked, and felt wi inward racking
 A' the wyte lay wi himsel;
 Swore neist night he'd mak a breaking—
 D—d the club and news to hell!

But alas! when habit's rooted,
 Few hae pith the root to pu';
 Will's resolves war aye nonsuited,—
 Promised aye—but aye gat fu'.

Aye at first at the convening,
 Moralized on what was right;
 Yet on clavers entertaining
 Dozed and drank tiil broad day-light.

Things at length drew near an ending;
 Cash rins out—Jean quite unhappy,
 Sees that will is now past mending
 Tynes a' heart, and taks—a drappy.

Jean, wha lately bare affliction
 Wi fae meek and mild an air,
 Schooled by whisky, learns new tricks soon,
 Flytes, and storms, and rugs Will's hair.

Jean, fae late the tenderest mither,
 Fond of ilk dear daughted wean;
 Now, heart-hardened ategither,
 Skelps them round frae morn till e'en.

Jean, wha, vogie, looked to busk aye
 In her hame-spun, thrifty wark,
 Now sells a' her braws for whisky,
 To her last gown, coat, and fark.

Rabby Burns, in mony a ditty,
 Loudly sings in whisky's praise,
 Sweet his sang—the mair's the pity
 E'er on it he wared sic lays.

Of a' the ills poor Caledonia
 Ever preed or e'er will taste,
 Brewed in hell's black Pandemonia,
 Whisky's ill will skaith her maist.

See them now! how changed wi drinking
 A' their youthful beauty gane!
 Davered, doited, daized, and blinking,
 Worn to perfect skin and bane!

In the cauld month of November,
 (Claife, and cash, and credit out)
 Cowering owre a dying ember,
 Wi ilk face as white's a clout!

Bond, and bill, and debts a' stoppit,
 Ilka sheaf felt on the bent,
 Cattle, beds, and blankets roupit
 Now, to pay the laird his rent.

No anither night to lodge here,
 No a friend their cause to plead!
 He taen on to be a sodger,
 She wi weans to beg her bread.

THE UPSHOT OF THE HISTORY.

OH! that folk wad weel consider
What it is to fyne a name,
What this warl is at hegither,
If bereft of honest fame!

Poortith ne'er can bring dishonour,
Hardships ne'er breed sorrows smart,
If bright conscience taks upon her
To shed sunshine round the heart.

But wi a' that walth can borrow,
Guilty shame will ay look down;
What maun then shame, want, and sorrow,
Wandering sad frae town to town!

Jeanie Miller, ance sae cheerie,
Ance sae happy, guid, and fair,
Left by Will, neist morning drearie
Taks the road of black despair!

Cauld the blast, the day was fleeting;
Pouch and purse without a plack,
In ilk hand a bairnie greeting,
And the third tied on her back.

Wan her face! and lean and haggard!
Ance sae sonsie, ance sae fweet!
What a change!—unhoused and beggared,
Starving—without claife or meat.

Far frae ilk kent spot she wandered,
 Skulking like a guilty thief;
 Here and there uncertain daundered,
 Stupified wi shame and grief.

But soon shame for bygone errors,
 Fled owre fast for ee to trace,
 Whan grim death, wi a' his terrors,
 Cam owre ilk sweet bairnie's face.

Spent wi toil, and cauld, and hunger,
 Baith down drapt, and down Jean fat,
 Daifed and doited now nae langer
 Thought and felt, but bursting grat.

Gloaming fast wi mirky shadow,
 Crap owre distant hill and plain;
 Darkened wood, and glen, and meadow,
 Adding fearful thoughts to pain.

Round and round, in wild distraction,
 Jeanie turned her tearful ee,
 Round and round for some protection
 Face nor house she couldna see.

Dark and darker grew the night aye,
 Loud and fair the cauld winds thud;
 Jean now spied a sma' bit lightie
 Blinking through a distant wood.

Up wi frantic haste she started,
 Cauld nor fear she felt nae mair;
 Hope, for ae bright moment, darted
 Through the gloom of dark despair.

Fast owre fallowed lea she brattled,
 Deep she wade through bog and burn,
 Sair wi steep and craig she battled,
 Till she reached the hoped sojourn,

Proud, 'mang scenes of simple Nature,
 Stately auld a mansion stood
 On a bank, whase sylvan feature,
 Smiled out owre the roaring flood.

Simmer here, in varied beauty,
 Late her flowry mantle spread,
 Whar auld chesnut, ake, and yew tree
 Mingling, lent their friendly shade.

Blasted now wi Winter's ravage,
 A' their gaudy livery cast,
 Wood and glen in wailings savage,
 Sung and howled to ilka blast.

Darkness stalked wi fancy terror,
 Mountains moved and castle rocked,
 Jean, half dead wi toil and horror,
 Reached the door and loudly knocked.

Wha thus rudely wakes the sleeping?
 Cryed a voice wi angry grane;
 Help! oh help! quo Jeanie, weeping,
 Help my infants, or they're gane.

Nipt wi cauld, wi hunger fainting,
 Baith lie speechless on the lea!
 Help! quo Jeanie, loud lamenting,
 Help my lammies, or they'll die.

Wha thus travels cauld and hungry,
 Wi yeung bairns fae late at e'en,
 Beggars, cried the voice mair angry,
 Beggars wi their brats, I ween.

Beggars now, alas! wha lately
 Helpt the beggar and the poor;
 Fye, gudeman, cried ane discreetly,
 Taunt na poortith at our door.

Sic a night and tale thegither
 Plead for mair than anger's din;
 Rife Jock, cried the pitying mither,
 Rife and let the wretched in.

Beggar now, alas! wha lately
 Helpt the beggar and the poor!
 Enter, quo the youth discreetly,
 While up flew the open door.

Beggar, or what else, sad mourner,
 Enter without fear or dread;
 Here, thank God, there's aye a corner
 To defend the houseless head.

For your bairnies cease repining;
 If in life, ye'll see them soon:
 Aff he flew; and brightly shining
 Through the dark clouds, brak the moon.

HERE, for ae night's kind protection,
 Leave we Jean and weans awhile,
 Racing Will in ilk direction,
 Far frae Britain's fostering isle.

Far frae scenes of tastening pleasure,
 Luv'e's delights and beauty's charms;
 Far frae friendship's social leisure,
 Plunged in murdering WAR'S alarms.

Or sit nature, vice, or folly,
 Or ambition's feverish brain,
 That fae aff, wi melancholy,
 Turns, sweet PEACE! thy joys to pain.

That, wi a' thy charms enticing
 To the ee and to the heart,
 Ilk endearing blifs despising),
 Tempts weak man frae thee to part.

Willie Gairlace, without filler,
 Credit, claise, or ought beside,
 Leaves his ance loved Jeanie Miller,
 And sweet bairns to warld wide.

Leaves his native cozy dwelling,
 Sheltered haughs and birken braes,
 Greensward howes and dainty mauling,
 Ance his profit, pride, and praise.

Decked wi scarlet, sword, and musket,
 Drunk wi dreams as fause as vain,
 Fleeced and flattered, roosed and buskit,
 Now but Will was wonderous fain.

Rattling, roaring, swearing, drinking.
 How could Thought her station keep?
 Drams and drumming (faes to thinking)
 Dozed Reflection fast asleep.

But when shipt to toils and dangers,
 Wi the cauld grund for his bed—
 Compassed round wi faes and strangers,
 Soon Will's dreams of fancy fled.

Led to battle's blood dyed banners
 Waving to the widow's moan,
 Will saw Glory's boasted honours
 End in life's expiring groan.

Round Valenciennes' strong walled city,
 Thick owre Dunkirk's fatal plain,
 Will (though dauntless) saw wi pity,
 Britain's valiant sons lie slain.

Fired by freedom's burning fever,
 Gallia's rack Death's slaughtering knell,
 Frae the Scheldt to Rhine's deep river,
 Britons fought—but Britons fell.

Fell unaided, though cemented
 By the faith of friendship's laws;
 Fell unpitied—unlamented!
 Bluiding in a thankless cause.

In the thrang of comrades deeing,
 Fighting foremost of them a'
 Swith! Fate's winged ball cam fleeing,
 And took Willie's leg in twa.

Thrice frae aff the grund he started,
 Thrice to stand he strave in vain,
 Thrice, as fainting strength departed,
 Sighed—and sank 'mid heaps of slain.

Erskine, wha ne'er slighted merit,
 Marked him 'mid the bloody fray;
 Save that gallant daring spirit,
 Twice he saved my life the day.

Battle fast on battle raging,
 Wed our stalwart youths awa;
 Day by day new faes engaging,
 Forced the weary back to fa.

Driven at last frae post to pillar,
 Left by friends wha ne'er proved true,
 Tricked by knaves wha pouched our filler,
 What could worn out valour do?

Myriads dark, like gathering thunder,
 Bursting, spread owre land and sea;
 Left alane, alas! nae wonder
 Britain's sons were forced to flee.

Cross the Ware and Yssel frozen,
 Deep through bogs and drifted snaw,
 Wounded, weak, and spent, our chosen
 Gallant men now faint and fa.

On a cart wi comrades bluiding,
 Stiff wi gore, and cauld as clay,
 Without cover, bed, or bedding,
 Five lang nights Will Gairlace lay.

In a sick-house, damp and narrow,
 (Left behind, wi hundreds mair,)
 See Will neist, in pain and sorrow,
 Wasting on a bed of care.

Wounds, and pain, and burning fever,
 Doctors cured wi healing art;
 Cured, alas! but never, never,
 Cooled the fever at his heart.

For, whan a' war found and sleeping,
 Still and on, baith ear and late,
 Will in briny grief lay sleeping,
 Mourning owre his hapless fate.

A' his gowden prospects vanished,
 A' his dreams of warlike fame,
 A' his glittering phantoms banished,
 Will could think of nought but hame.

Think of nought but rural quiet,
 Rural labour, rural ploys;
 Far frae carnage, bluid, and rict,
 War, and a' its murdering joys.

BACK to Britain's fertile garden,
 Will's returned (exchanged for faes),
 Wi ae leg, and no a farden,
 Friend or credit, meat or claife.

Lang through h country, burgh, and city,
 Crippling on a wooden leg,
 Gathering alms frae melting pity,
 See poor Gairlace forced to beg.

Placed at length on Chelsea's bounty,
 Now to langer beg thinks shame,
 Dreams ance mair of smiling plenty,
 Dreams of former joys, and hame.

Hame, and a' its fond attractions,
 Fast to Will's warm bosom flee;
 While the thoughts of dear connections
 Swell his heart and blind his ee.

Monster! wha could hae neglected
 'Three sma' infants and a wife,
 Naked, starving, unprotected,
 Them too dearer ance than life.

Villain! wha, wi graceless folly,
 Ruined her he ought to save!
 Changed her joys to melancholy,
 Beggary, and—perhaps a grave.

Starting, wi Remorse distracted,
 Crushed wi grief's increasing load,
 Up he banged, and fair afflicted,
 Sad and silent took the road.

Sometimes briskly, sometimes flaggin,
 Sometimes helpit, Will gat forth,
 On a cart or in a waggon,
 Hirpling aye towards the north.

Tired at e'ning, stepping hooly,
 Pondering on his thraward fate,
 In the bonny month of July,
 Willie, heedless, tiat his gate.

Aft the southland breeze was blawing,
 Sweetly sighed the green ake wood,
 Loud the din of streams fast fa'ing,
 Strack the ear wi thundering thud.

Ewes and lambs on braes ran bleeting,
 Linties fang on ilka tree,
 Frae the west the sun, near setting,
 Flamed on Roslin's towers fae hie.

Roslin's towers and braes fae bonny,
 Craigs and water, woods and glen,
 Roslin's banks! unpeered by ony,
 Save the mufes hawthorn den.

Ilka sound and charm delighting,
 Will, (though hardly fit to gang,)
 Wandered on through scenes inviting,
 Listening to the mavis' fang.

Faint at length, the day fast closing,
 On a fragrant strawberry steep,
 Esk's sweet stream to rest composing,
 Wearied Nature drapt asleep.

Soldier, rise! the dews of e'ening
 Gathering fa' wi deadly skaith!
 Wounded foldier! if complaining,
 Sleep nae here to catch your death.

Traveller, waken!—night advancing,
 Cleeds wi gray the neeboring hill;
 Lambs nae mair on knowes are dancing,
 A' the woods are mute and still.

hat hae I, cried Willie, waking,
What hae I frae night to dree?
orn, through clouds in splendour breaking,
Lights nae brightning hope to me.

ouse nor hame, nor farm nor steddin,
Wife nor bairns hae I to see,
ouse nor hame, nor bed nor bedding,
What hae I frae night to dree?

air, alas! and sad and many
Are the ills poor mortals share,
et, though hame nor bed ye hae nae,
Yield nae, Soldier, to despair.

hat's this life, sae wae and wearie,
If Hope's brightning beams should fail?
ee, though night comes, dark and eerie,
Yon sma' cot-light cheers the dale.

here, though walth and waste ne'er riot,
Humbler joys their comforts shed,
about—health—content and quiet—
Mourner, there ye'se get a bed.

Wife 'tis true, wi bairnies smiling,
There, alas! ye need nae seek—
et there bairns, ilk care beguiling,
Paint wi smiles a mither's cheek.

' her earthly pride and pleasure
Left to cheer her widow'd lot,
' her wardly walth and treasure
To adorn her lanely cot!

Cheer, then, Soldier, midst affliction
 Bright'ning joys will aften shine;
 Virtue aye claims Heaven's protection—
 Trust to providence divine!

Sweet as Rosebank's woods and river
 Cool, when simmer's sunbeams dart,
 Cam ilk word, and cooled the fever
 That lang burned at Willie's heart.

Silent stept he on poor fallow,
 Listening to his guide before,
 Owre green know and gowany hallow,
 Till they reached the cot-house door.

Laigh it was; yet sweet, though humb
 Decked wi hinnysuckle round;
 Clear below Esk's waters rumble,
 Deep glens murmuring back the soun

Melville's towers, sae white and stately,
 Dim by gloaming glint to view;
 Thro' Lasswade's dark woods keek swee
 Skies sae red and lift sae blue!

Entering now in transport mingle
 Mither fond and happy wear,
 Smiling round a canty ingle,
 Blessing on a clean hearth stane.

Soldier, welcome!—come, be cheery—
 Here ye'se rest, and take your bed—
 Faint, waes me! ye seem, and weary,
 Pale's your cheek, sae lately red.

hanged I am, sighed Willie till her ;
 Changed, nae doubt, as changed can be :
 et, alas, does Jeanie Miller
 Nought of Willie Gairlace see ?

lae ye marked the dews of morning
 Glittering in the sunny ray,
 Quickly fa', whan, without warning,
 Rough blasts cam and shook the spray.

lae ye seen the bird fast fleeing
 Drap, whien pierced by Death mair fleet?
 hen see Jean, wi colour deeing,
 Senseless drap at Willie's feet.

fter three lang years affliction
 (A' their waes now hushed to rest,)
 can ance mair, in fond affection
 Clasps her Willie to her breast.

tells him a' her sad, sad suffering,
 How she wandered, starving poor,
 leaning Pity's scanty offerings,
 Wi three bairns, frae door to door.

ow she served—and toiled—and fevered,
 Lost her health and syne her bread ;
 ow that grief, when scarce recovered,
 Took her brain and turned her head.

ow she wandered round the county
 Mony a live-lang night her lane ;
 'ill at last an angel's bounty
 Brought her senses back again ?

Gae her meat—and claise—and siller ;
 Gae her bairnie's wark and lear ;
 Lastly, gae this cot-house till her,
 Wi four sterling pounds a year.

Willie, heark'ning, wiped his e'en aye ;—
 'Oh ! what sins hae I to rue !
 'But say, wha's this angel, Jeanie !
 'Wha,' quo Jeanie, 'but Buccleugh !

'Here, supported—cheered—and cherished
 Nine blessed months I've lived an mair ;
 Seen these infants clad and nourished,
 Dried my tears and 'int despair :

Sometimes serving, sometimes spinning,
 Light the lanesome hours gae round :
 Lightly, too, ilk quarter rining,
 Brings yon angel's helping pound !

Eight pounds mair, cried Willie, fondly,
 Eight pounds mair, will do nae harm,
 And, O Jean, gin friends war kindly,
 Eight pounds soon might stock a farm.

There ance mair to thrive by ploughing
 Freed fra a' that peace destroys,
 Idle waste and drucken ruin,
 War, and a' its murdering joys !

Thrice he kissed his lang lost treasure ;
 Thrice ilka bairn—but could nae speak
 Tears of luv, and hope, and pleasure,
 Streamed in silence down his chee]