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RAB AND RINGAN,

A TALE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

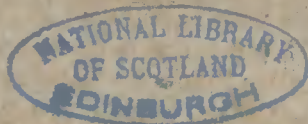
THE LOSS O' THE PACK,

A TRUE TALE.

Both as deliverd in the Pantheon, Edinburgh.

BY ALEXANDER WILSON,

Author of *Watty and Meg, &c. &c.*



PAISLEY:

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The following Tale was recited by the Author, at the Pantheon, in a debate on the Question, "Whether is Diffidence, or the Allurements of Pleasure, the greatest Bar to Progress in Knowledge."

RAB AND RINGAN,

A TALE.

INTRODUCTION.

HECH! but 'tis awfu' like to rise up here,
Whar sic a sight o' learnt fouks' pows appear!
Sae mony piercing een a' fixt on ane,
Is maist enough to freeze me to a stang!
But 'tis ae mercy—mony thanks to fate,
Pedlars are poor, but unco seldom blate.

(Speaking to the President.)

This question, Sir, has been right weel disputet,
And meikle, weel-a-wat's been said about it:
Chiels, that precisely to the point can speak,
And gallop o'er lang blauds o' kittle Greck,
Hae sent frae ilka side their sharp opinion,
And peel'd it up as ane wad peel an ingon*.

I winna plague you lang-wi' my poor spale,
But only crave your patience to a Tale:
By which ye'll ken on whatna side I'm stinnin',
As I perceive your hinmost minute's rinnin'.

* The question had been spoken to on both sides before this Tale was recited, which was the last opinion given on the debate.

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THE TALE.

There liv'd in Fife an auld, stout, warldly chiel,
Wha's stomach kend nae fare but milk and meal;
A wife he had, I think they ca'd her Bell,
And twa big sons, amais't as heigh's himsel';
Rab was a gleg, smart cock, wi' pouthert pash,
Ringan, a slow, feart, bashfu', simple hash.

Baith to the College gaed. At first spruce Rab,
At Greek and Latin, grew a very dab:
He beat a' roun' about him, fair and clean,
And ilk ane courted him to be their frien';
Frae house to house they harl'd him to dinner,
But curst poor Ringan for a hum-drum sinner.

Rab tauked now in sic a lofty strain,
As tho' braid Scotland had been a' his ain,
He ca'd the Kirk the Church, the Yirth the Globe;
And chang'd his name forsooth, frae Rab to Bob.
Whare'er ye met him, flourishing his rung,
The hale discourse was murder'd wi' his tongue.
On friends and faes wi' impudence he set,
And ramm'd his nose in ev'ry thing he met.

The Collège now, to Rab grew douf and dull,
He scorn'd wi' books to stupify his skull;
But whirl'd to Plays and Balls, and sic like places,
And roar'd awa' at Fairs and Kintra Races:
Sent hame for filler trae his mither Bell,
And cast a horse, and rade a race himsel';
Drank night and day, and syne when mortal fu',
Row'd on the floor, and snor'd like ony iow;
Loft a' his filler wi' some gambling sparks,
And pawn'd for punch, his Bible and his farks;

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Till, driven at last to own he had enough,
Gaed hame a' rags to haud his father's pleugh.

Poor hum-drum Ringan, played anither part,
For Ringan wanted neither wit nor art :
Of mony a far-aff place he kend the gate ;
Was deep, deep learn'd, but unco, unco blate.
He kend how mony mile 'twas to the moon,
How mony rake wad lave the ocean toom ;
Whare a' the swallows gaed in time o' snaw ;
What gars the thunder roar, and tempests blaw ;
Whare lumps o' filler grow aneath the grun ;
How a' this yirth rows round about the sun ;
In short, on books sae meikle time he spent,
Ye cou'dna speak o' ought, but Ringan kent.

Sae meikle learning, wi' sae little pride,
Soon gained the love o' a' the kintra side,
And Death, at that time, happ'ning to nip aff
The Parish Minister—a poor dull ca'f,
Ringan was fought—he cou'dna say them nay,
And there he's preaching at this very day.

MORAL.

Now, Mr. President, I think 'tis plain,
That youthfu' diffidence is certain gain.
Instead of blocking up the road to knowledge,
It guides alike, in Commerce or at College ;
Struggles, the bursts of passion to controul,
Feeds all the finer feelings of the soul ;
Defies the deep laid stratagems of guile,
And gives even innocence a sweeter smile ;
Ennobles all the little worth we have,
And shields our virtue even to the grave.

How vast the difference then, between the twain :
 Since pleasure ever is pursu'd by pain.
 Pleasure's a Syren, with inviting arms,
 Sweet is her voice, and pow'ful are her charms ;
 Lur'd by her call, we tread her flow'ry ground,
 Joy wings out steps, and music warbles round ;
 Lull'd in her arms, we lose the flying hours,
 And lie embosom'd midst her blooming bow'rs,
 Till—arm'd with death, she watches our undoing,
 Stabs while she sings, and triumphs in our ruin.

END OF RAB AND RINGAN.

*The following Tale was recited by the Author at the
 Pantheon, in a Debate on the Question, "Whether
 is Disappointment in Love, or the Loss of Fortune
 hardest to bear."*

THE LOSS O' THE PACK,

A TRUE TALE.

(Recited in the Character of a poor Pedlar.)

'BOUTGATES I hate, quo' ginning Maggy Pringle,
 Syne har'd Watty, greeting, thro' the ingle.
 Since this fell question seems sae lang t'd hing on,
 In twa-three words I'll gie ye my opinion.

I wha stand here, in this bare scoury coat,
 Was ance a Packman, wordy mony a groat :
 I've carried Packs as big's your waeikle table ;
 I've scarted pats, and sleepet in a stable :
 Sax pounds I wadna for my pack ance ta'en,
 And I could baaldly brag 'twas a' mine ain.

Ay! thae war day indeed, that gart me hope,
 Aeblins, thro' time, to warfle up a shop:
 And as a wife aye in my noddle ran,
 I kend my Kate wad grapple at me than.
 O Kate was past compare! sic cheeks! sic een!
 Sic smiling looks! were never, never seen.
 Dear, dear I lo'ed her, and whane'er we met,
 Pleadet to have the bridal-day but set:
 Stappet her pouches fu' o' prins and laces,
 And thought mysel' weel paid wi' twa-three kisses,
 Yet still she put it aff frae day to day,
 And aften kindly in my lug wad say,
 " Ae half-year langer is nae unco stop,
 " We'll marry then, and syne set up a shop."

O Sir, but lassies wōrds are fast and fair!
 They sooth our grief, and banish ilka care;
 Wha wadna toil to please the lass he lo'es?
 A lover true minds this in a' he does.
 Finding her mind was thus sae firmly bent,
 And that I coudna get her to relent,
 There was nought left, but quietly to resign,
 To heeze my pack for ae lang hard campaign;
 And as the Highlands was the place for meat,
 I ventur'd there in spite of wind and weat.

Cauld now the Winter blew, and deep the snaw
 For three hale days incessantly did fa'
 Far in a muir, amang the whirling drift,
 Whar nought was seen but mountains and the list,
 I lost my road, and wander'd mony a mile,
 Maist dead wi' hunger, cauld, and fright, and toil.
 Thus wand'ring, east or west, I kend na' where,
 My mind o'ercome wi' gloom and black despair,

Wi' a fell ringe, I plung'd at ance, forsooth,
 Down thro' a wreath o' snaw, up to my mouth.
 Clean o'er my head my precious wallet flew,
 But whar it gaed, Lord kens, I never knew!

What great misfortunes are pour'd down on some,
 I thought my fearfu' hinderen' was come!
 Wi' grief and sorrow was my faul' o'ercaft,
 Hk breath I drew was like to be my last;
 For aye the mair I warst'd roun' and roun',
 I fand mysel' aye stick the deeper down;
 'Till ance, at length, wi' a prodigious pull,
 I drew my poor cauld carcase frae the hole.

Lang, lang I sought and graped for my pack,
 Till night and hunger forc'd me to come back.
 For three lang hours I wander'd up and down,
 Till chance, at last convey'd me to a town:
 There, wi' a trembling hand, I wrote my Kate
 A sad account of a' my luckless fate;
 But bade her aye be kind, and no despair,
 Since life was left, I soon wad gather mair;
 Wi' whilk, I hop'd, within a towmond's date,
 To be at hame, and share it a' wi' Kate

Fool that I was, how little did I think
 That love wad soon be lost for fa't o' Clink.
 The loss of fair won wealth, tho' hard to bear,
 Afore this—ne'er had pow'r. to force a tear.
 I trusted time wad bring things round again,
 And Kate, dear Kate! wad then be a' mine ain:
 Consol'd my mind in hopes o' better luck,
 But, O! what sad reverse!—how thunderstruck!
 Whan ae black day brought word frae Rab my brith-
 That Kate was cried, and married on anither! (er.

Tho' a' my friends, and ilka comrade sweet,
 At ance, had drapp'd cauld dead at my feet;
 Or, tho' I'd heard the last day's dreadful ca',
 Nae deeper horror on my heart cou'd fa':
 I curs'd mysel', I curs'd my luckless fate,
 And grat—and sobbing cried—O Kate! O Kate!

Frae that day forth—I never mair did weel,
 But drank, and ran headforemost to the deel.
 My filler vanish'd, far frae hame I pin'd;
 But Kate, for ever ran across my mind.
 In her were a' my hopes,—these hopes were vain,
 And now—P'll never see her like again.

'Twas this, Sir President, that gart me start,
 Wi' meikle grief and sorrow at my heart,
 To gie my vote, frae sad experience, here,
 That disappointed love is war to bear
 Ten thousand times than loss of warld's gear.

F I N I S.

Paisley, printed by J. Neilson, Cumberland.