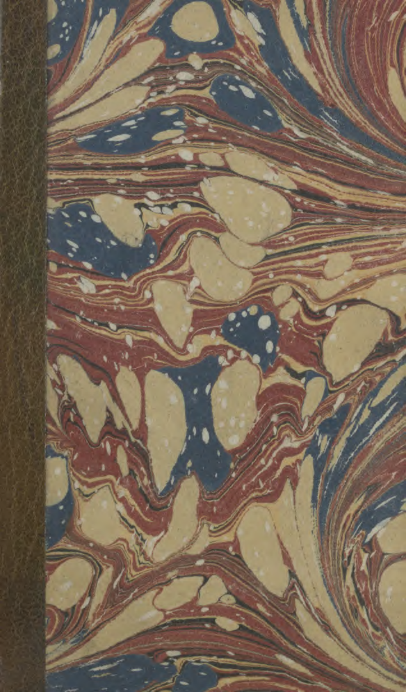

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THE LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS THE SCOTS POET.

FALKIRK:

PRINTED FOR BOOKSELLERS.

Life of Robert Burns.

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 25th January, 1759, in a cottage about two miles south from Ayr, not far from the Kirk of Alloway and the "Auld Brig of Doon." His father, William Burnes or Burness, was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire. When about 19 years of age, he removed to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where he worked sometime as a gardener, and afterwards went to Ayrshire, where he was employed as gardener and overseer to a gentleman of small estate; but resided on a few acres of land which he held on lease from the proprietor, and where he intended to establish himself as a nurseryman. He married Agnes Brown in December, 1757, and the poet was their first-born. William Burness was a man of great integrity, and of strictly religious principles, and is beautifully painted by the poet "as the saint, the father, and the husband," in the *Cottar's Saturday Night.* Agnes Brown, the wife of this goodman, was a woman of great prudence and sagacity, and is said to have had a considerable resemblance in features to her celebrated son. She possessed a great store of ballads and traditionary tales, which no doubt nourished the imagination of the young poet. With all the economy and hard labour of this worthy pair, things did not turn well out at this place, and William Burness removed to the farm of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr, at Whitsunday, 1766, when his son Robert was about seven or eight years old. Here, from the soil being of the worst description, and other causes, he was

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glad to give up the bargain at the end of six years. He then removed to a better farm, that of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, where another train of misfortunes overtook him; and at last a dispute about the lease, which had been referred to arbitration, resulted in his ruin. He lived to know of the discision, but death saved him from witnessing its necessary consequences. He died of consumption on the 13th of February, 1784. In the midst of these struggles William Burness used the utmost exertions to educate his children,—a duty which is seldom neglected by Scottish parents however scanty their means. Robert and Gilbert his next brother, attended school together. Their teacher speaking of them, says, "Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church music: here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear in particular, was remakable dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another." "The two first books," says the poet himself, in 1787, "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 bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

When they had been about two years at Mount Oliphant their Schoolmaster left the country. "There being no school near us," saays Gilbert Burns, "and our little services being already useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings by candle-light, —and in this way my two elder sisters got all the education they ever received." When Burns was about thirteen or fourteen years old, he was sent with his brother Gilbert, "week about," during a summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple, two miles distant, their father being unable to pay two fees, or they could not be both spared at once from the labours of the farm. "We lived very poorly," says the poet; "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 thrash 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 scoundrel factor's insolent letters, which used to set us all in tears." "To the buffetings of misfortune," says Gilbert, "we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost continually afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation, in his bed, in the night time."

About a year after this period, their old school-

master, Mr Murdoch, having established himself in the town of Ayr, Robert for some time attended him there, and learned a little English Grammar, Latin and French. In the meantime, he read with great avidity every book chance threw in his way. The removal of the family to Lochlea took place when Burns was in his sixteenth year, a little before which period, according to his own account, he "first committed the sin of rhyme." In one of his epistles he says,

"I mind it weel, in early date,
When I beardless, young, and blate—
———
E'er then, a wish, I mind its power,
A wish, that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least;
The rough bur-thistle spreading wide,
Amang the bearded bear,
I turned the weeder-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear."

While at Lochlea, Robert and his brother were employed by their father as regular labourers and received £7 each a year. Robert was remarkable for his personal strength, and worked very hard at all the tasks of the farm. "In my seventeenth year," he says "to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school;" and afterward, "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 labour than while I was in actual exercise, I spent my evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure

without an assistant confident. 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 in the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe." While thus occupied a number of his pieces were composed, chiefly those which relate to love, a passion of which Burns was extremely susceptible. A part of his nineteenth year was spent at Kirkoswald, whither he had gone to learn mensuration, geometry, &c. Kirkoswald, which lies on the sea coast, was at that time a great resort of smugglers, and Burns did not escape some contamination from the society he met with there. His brother Gilbert says, he observed from that period a change in his habits.

"About this time," says Gilbert, "he and I had for some years taken land of our father, for the purpose of raising flax on our own account; and in the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax-dressing." Burns, accordingly, in pursuance of this resolution, went to a relation of his mother's, a flax-dresser in Irvine, with the view of learning this trade, and for a time applied himself with great diligence. But on a new year's morning the shop caught fire, and was totally consumed, and he was left in his own words, "like a true poet, not worth a sixpence." Three days before this unfortunate fire took place, he addressed a letter to his father, which contained much good sense and pious reflection. Among other things, he says, "I am more pleased with the

15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the seventh chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer."* Had Burns always acted up to the dictates of his better judgment and feelings, he would have been a much more happy and prosperous man. But, alas, for human nature! with much that was truly noble and generous, he inherited also much of the frailty incident to fallen man. "At Irvine," says Gilbert, "he contracted some acquaintances of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him." The misfortunes of his father reached their crisis about the time of Robert's return from Irvine, and he did not live long afterwards.

About this time Burns had to undergo the penance then awarded by the discipline of the Church of Scotland for the birth of an illegimate child. His conduct on this occasion was marked by a le-

*The verses are as follows:

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16. They shall hunger no more, neither drink any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

vity which cannot be justified, and is only to be accounted for on the supposition of his wishing to brave out his shame in the eyes of his jovial associates—for the tenderness and manliness of Burns's general feeling will not permit us to think that such deportment was the deliberate expression of his mind.

About three months before the death of William Burns, Robert and Gilbert, who had for sometime foreseen the storm that was thickening round their father's dwelling, came to the resolution of taking the farm of Mossgiel, in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline, with the view of providing the family with a shelter. It was stocked with their joint property and savings, but notwithstanding all their exertions they could make little out of it. It was during their residence at Mossgiel, which continued four years, that Burns composed some of his most celebrated pieces. Among these were *The Holy Tulzie* or *Twa Herds, Holy Willie's Prayer, the Epistle to Davie, Death and Doctor Hornbook*, the verses to the *Mouse* and *Mountain Daisy*, the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, &c. Among these are some of those pieces remarkable for the poignancy of their satire and the breadth of their humour. To explain the causes which give rise to such of these productions as glance upon religion, or rather upon certain teachers of religion, whom he has therein commemorated, would be impracticable in so brief a memoir. Suffice it to say, that, at the period of their composition, an unusual ferment prevailed in the district of Ayrshire, where our poet resided, occasioned by a misunderstanding betwixt several of the leading clergy and the heritors,—among the latter of whom was Burns's

landlord. Burns sided with his patron, and was no doubt a powerful auxiliary. As to these pieces various opinions have been held—some heaping upon Burns the charges of blasphemy, irreligion, &c., while others have praised him for so meritorious a task as the exposure and denunciation of what they are pleased to call hypocrisy and fanaticism. To the present generation it is not easy to convey an adequate notion of the height to which parties ran in the West Country at this period, nor of the acrimony that was ingrafted on the polemical controversies then raging. These considerations should go far in the eyes of even the most austere to exculpate Burns from the charges alluded to, and incline them rather to impute to the fiery vehemence of his temperament those sallies which overleap the bounds of decorum—for that Burns, in spite of the levity of certain passages to be found in his works, was embued, and deeply embued, with the solemn and contemplative thoughts which belong to religious feeling, and in the longrun generally issue in strict religious principle, cannot fairly be denied. But no one had, on the other hand, a keener preeeption of the ludicrous; and such peculiarities in his opponents as afforded a tempting mark for the shafts of the satirist were sure to be taken advantage of; at all events, the humour of these pieces is confessedly unrivalled. *Halloween*, a descriptive poem, perhaps more exquisite wrought than the Holy Fair, and containing nothing that could offend the feelings of any body, was produced about the same period.

After residing some time at Mossgiel, he seems to have perceived that the farm would at best furnish no more than the bare means of subsist-

ence to so large a family, and came at last to the resolution of trying his fortune in the West Indies. To this step, it is probable, he was more eagerly urged by the treatment he received from the family of the celebrated Jean, his future wife, and now respected widow. This young woman who, from the first period of her intimacy with Burns, was loved by him with an ardent attachment, which continued till the close of his life, unfortunately became pregnant; and the disclosure of the fact to her father, whose name was Armour, a master mason in Irvine, drew down upon herself and her lover the most fierce resentment. The old man would not be appeased, and when Burns wished to repair their error by marriage, spurned at the proposal; and to such an unreasonable length did he carry his indignation, as to prevail on his daughter to destroy a written acknowledgment she had got from Burns of her being his wife,—a document which the law of Scotland hold a valid proof of marriage. The poet has recorded in some of his letters the anguish of his feelings on this occasion.

Jamaica was now his mark; and, through the influence of a friend in Irvine, he procured a situation as assistant overseer on a plantation in the colony. To defray his outfit, and other expenses, it now occured to him, for the first time, to publish his poems, though of their yielding him any thing he was extremely doubtful. They were at length printed at Kilmarnock, the edition consisted of 600 copies; and our poet, after paying all expenses, cleared about £20. In the meantime his fame began to take a start, and copies of his volume having fallen into the hands of people of taste and judgment, a general enquiry

about him began to prevail, and it became an object of desire with some of his friends to detain him in his native country. With this view, an office was suggested; and Burns, it would appear, was not averse to fall in with their wishes. Having been introduced about the same time also to the tables and acquaintance of several distinguished families, the originality and vigour of his genius, which was displayed in his conversation no less than his poetry, began to be much talked of. Among the first to appreciate his powers may be named the celebrated Professor Dugal Stewart, Dr Hugh Blair, and above all, Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, a lady of high birth and ample fortune, who was enthusiastically attached to every thing which concerned the honour and interest of her native country. The friendship of this lady continued unabated to the day of the poet's death, and to her a large part of his letters were addressed.

In the meantime, the appointment to the Excise, which he had reason to hope for, being, as he though rather slow in reaching him, Burns began once more to resume the idea of pushing his fortune in the West Indies and made several preparations for that purpose. He even took farewell of some of his friends, and proceeded, as he himself informs us, to convoy his trunk so far on the road to Greenock, where he was to embark in a few days for America. On this occasion he composed the farewell dirge to his native land, and which ends thus:—

" Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales,
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,

Pursuing past unhappy loves,
Farewell my friends! farewell my foes!
My peace with these—my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell the bonny banks of Ayr."

At this critical juncture of his life and fortunes, he was presented with a letter, addressed to a friend of his in the West, from the celebrated Dr. Blacklock of Edinburgh, himself a poet and man of fine genius, the subject of which was a most flattering descant on the merits and genius of Burns; and strongly advising that a second and more perfect edition of his poems should be immediately printed and staking his reputation on their triumphant success. Under this encouragement Burns instantly came to the resolution of repairing to the capital, which at that time was the residence, as it is now, of many of the most distinguished names that adorn the annals of Scottish literature. He was immediately introduced by the kind Dr. Blacklock, who received him with all the warmth of paternal affection, to the notice and acquaintance of the most eminent literati. It was arranged that his second edition should come out under the auspices of Mr Creech, then the first of the metropolitan booksellers; and the merits of the work were previously made known in a criticism from the pen of the celebrated Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*, which appeared in *The Lounger*, a celebrated periodical of the day. The Earl of Glencairn, a nobleman of great affability and benevolence, whose kindness Burns acknowledges with grateful reverence, also made interest with the Caledonian Hunt, (an association of most of the Scottish nobility,) to accept the dedication of

the forthcoming edition, and to subscribe individually for copies.

From this date Burns continued to receive every day new introductions, and was caressed, praised and flattered, wherever he went. Indeed his colloquial powers, independent of his merits as a poet, by the concurring testimony of all who had the means of judging, were of themselves sufficient to make his company coveted. In grave discussions the shrewd sagacity of his judgment, joined to a musculine vigour of language, were no less striking and delightful than the sparkling stream of wit and humour which ran through his lighter essays. It was remarked, that though born and bred in a sphere far beneath that in which he now figured, that there was no awkward rusticity about him; or if any was preceptible to the polished eye of fashion, it was so little as only to stamp the greater individuality of his character. With those of his own sex, it was noticed, that sometimes in the collision of argument his dissent from opposite opinions was not exactly smoothed down to the established standard of courtesy; but at no time could boorishness or rudeness be marked in his behaviour, if we make but one exception, perhaps, which is worth noticing, and where the provocation of the poet, it must be allowed, was great. This was the rebuff he gave a clergyman, at a breakfast table one morning, who was violently criticising *Gray's Elegy*. This piece was a great favourite of Burns's, who challenged the impugner of its merits to point out specifically the passages or sentiments he objected to. Here unfortunately the critic was gravelled, and in his attempts shockingly blundered the text. This roused the indignation of the poet, who,

unable to express his wrath any longer, thus addressed him, "Sir, I now perceive a man may be very learned, and an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and yet after all be a d——d blockhead." With those of the other sex his manners and address were in the highest degree differential and polished. A letter from himself about this time says, "For my own affairs I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis, or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth day inscribed among the wonderful events in the Poor Robin and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the Battle of Bothwell Bridge." "The attention he received," says Mr. Dugald Stewart, "from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly in the country; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquantance."

Notwithstanding all this, and when Burns had retired from the homage of these glittering saloons, and the tumultuous applause of convival assemblies, to the obscure lodgings which he then occupied in one of the closes of the High Street of Edinburgh, he could not shield himself from painful reflections. He came to be more than half aware that the smiles of the great often go for very little; and many passages in his letters written about this time betray but too plainly the secret emotions of his soul. His keen sensibility was wounded by many of the thoughts which ob-

truded themselves, and his penetration was not long in apprehending that their own gratifications is often sought by the great in their notice of the poor man who has nothing to offer in return but his own talents. Nothing was done in the way of procuring him an appointment, which he had reasonably been led to suspect. Some convival acquaintances were also contracted about this time not much to be desired, and it is believed some of his great friends were pleased to take rather an exception at this. Burns did fall into some errors. But it were well for those who may be disposed to pass too sweeping a condemnation on the aberrations of Burns in this part of his career, as well as in some other passages of his life, to pause and reflect whether there was ever almost any man who stood in such peculiar circumstances, or who had so much in his history to account and apologise for his indiscretion.

On the 6th May, 1787, after spending about six months in the capital, Burns departed from Edinburgh, in company with a friend, on a country excursion before he should return for Ayrshire. His route was southward, and he visited in the course of his tour several distinguished families. Returned to Mauchline on the 8th July, where he remained but a few days, and undertook another tour through the north. In this excursion he was received with much courtesy at the houses of many eminent persons—among these were the noble family of Argyle. On these occasions he composed some of his most admired lyrics. After another visit to his family at Mossgeil, he repaired in March, 1788, to Dalswinton, in Dumfries-shire, the residence of Mr Miller, with whom he was in treaty for the lease of a farm on his estate. Du-

ring part of the intervening months he had been occasionally in Edinburgh, as he says, to adjust matters with his booksellers, although it is pretty clear, that a visit to some of his old jovial companions was the true cause. After a good deal of time lost between the arranging of his lease at Dalswinton and settling with his booksellers, a period which from different causes he seems to have spent rather uneasily, his affairs came at last to assume something like a difinite shape. The settlement of accounts with the booksellers, put him in possession of £500 or £600, and the terms of agreement at Dalswinton being finally arranged, he left Edinburgh for his new possession, having also in his pocket an excise commission as a further resource should he come to need it, which he had procured through the friendship of Mr Graham of Fintry, one of the Commissioners.

At Whitsunday 1788, Burns entered upon his new farm, and the following November brought home Jane Armour, now Mrs Burns, whom he had married some time previously, and for a time matters went on pretty smoothly. In several of his letters he speaks with much affection of his wife, and of her admirable qualities. Many of his best pieces were composed here; and, on the whole, the poet seemed in a fair way of obtaining competence and such reasonable share of happiness as man may look for. But the burning vehemence of his temperament, the keenness of his sensibility, and a constitutional melancholy to which he had through all his life been subject, were often to him the source of uneasiness and disquiet; Thus exhibiting to us how little to be coveted is the possession of lofty talents and high genius, even with all the fame and distinction they

confer, when accompanied with such painful draw-backs; and affording a lesson of contentment to those who are denied, and may feel disposed to envy, such dangerous gifts. "The fate and characters of the rhyming tribe," thus writes the poet himself in 1783, "often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastic nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet." In these short sentences Burns has traced his own character far better than any one else has done it since.

The affairs of the farm did not long thrive, and perceiving them going backwards, Burns resolved to enter upon the duties of the Excise. He was accordingly appointed to do duty in that capacity

in the district where his own farm was situated. His income was at first only £35, but he still retained Elliesland. During the prosperity of his farm, Burns conducted himself wisely and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunscore kirk on Sunday, and assisted in forming a reading club. He also paid particular attention to the education of his children, and assisted them greatly himself. Afterwards, however, on the failure of his farming projects, the gloom which preyed on his spirits made him too often not unwilling to become the companion of the thoughtless and the dissipated. Yet, in spite of these follies, Burns was never deserted by that deep feeling of honour and independence of spirit which led him always to detest whatever was mean or base;* and none could

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* Burns's disinterestedness and generosity could be shown in hundreds of instances, and the extreme tenderness of his feelings was strongly proved on one particular occasion, when he flung a bitter curse on a neighbouring farmer for wounding a hare, motioning him from his presence, else he would throw him into the river.

The following is an abstract from one of his letters, and shews how much he hated the sense of pecuniary obligations:—"Sir, it is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed to any man.—Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas: and now, I don't owe a shilling to man, or woman either. But for these dirty dog's-eared little pages, (Scotch bank-

condemn more severely, or feel deeper compunction and repentance for his errors, than he did himself.

It was unfortunate for Burns that he about this time got embroiled with the Excise, who had been informed of some rash expressions, and it is believed rash actions, in which he was guilty in relation to political matters. The French Revolution was then beginning to break out, and the facinating glare with which it was at first surrounded, misled, as every one knows, the minds of many men of virtue and understanding, and none more so, perhaps, than such as, like our poet, were embued with the largest portion of philanthrophy. The sickening horrors of that sanguinary drama, as it came to unfold itself, of course soon dispelled the illusion; but at the early period we speak of, the Revolution came recommended to the wishes and sympathies of many. The interest of his friends at the head of the Excise saved Burns, but his indiscretions were remembered for a time, and were the cause of much uneasiness to him. He was also in the habit of indulging in jests on his new professions without much circumspection, but these were comparatively harmless. On one occasion, for instance, while glancing at what he considered the discreditable nature of his employ, he said, "I have the same consola-

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notes,) I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face."

tion, however, which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to his auditors on one of the streets of Kilmarnock.—'Gentlemen," said he, "I can assure you, for your further encouragement, that ours is the most blackguard corps under the crown consequently an honest man has the better chance of promotion."'

But, in point of fact, Burns had too much discrimination and good sense to cherish deeply the absurd notions of equality and other trumpery follies then prevalent, and he in many passages of his correspondence distinctly avows that his jacobinism, like the jacobitism of the present day, was more a thing of whim and fancy than any thing else: It chimed in more with the romance of the poet than the judgment of the man.

The concluding and most mournful part of our sketch must necessarily be brief. After continuing to hold the farm for some time after entering on his new duties, he came to the resolution of abandoning Elliesland, and betaking himself altogether to the revenue. His salary was advanced to £70; and although, as we have seen, his company was a good deal broken in upon, it is well known Burns discharged his duties with faithfulness and accuracy. Towards the close of 1799 he was employed as acting supervisor. During part of that year his younger child lingered through an illness of which every week promised to be the last, and when she was in the end cut off, the nerves of the poet, who had unceasingly watched her with the fondest solicitude, were shattered to an unusual degree. A cold which he subsequently caught completed the measure of his ill health, and from this period may be dated the commencement of that gradual decay which terminated in his

death. Of the approaching event he was perfectly sensible, and many of his letters at this time breath the tenderest strains of resignation and piety. One of these is as follows:—

"Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasoning; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.—Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, and the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. THE OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny, and the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul, those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities—an all powerful and equally beneficient God—and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field;—the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

"I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laughed at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do.

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Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply embue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter and wrapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift delighted degrees, is wrapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

> "These as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
> Is full of thee;"

and so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.—These are no ideal pleasure: they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say equal to them? And they have this precious vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God."

Alluding one day to his expected dissolution, he said, he was well aware that his death

would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation; the letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restain them, or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame.

From a village on the coast, where he had gone for the benefit of sea-bathing, he returned to Dumfries, the place of his residence, on the 8th of July, 1796, with his constitution fast wearing out. In the words of an eye-witness, "Dumfries was like a besieged place. It was known he was dying. And the anxiety, not of the rich and the learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history—of his person—of his works—of his family—of his fame—and of his untimely and approaching fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endear Dumfries to remembrance."

When approaching his last hour, says one of his biographers, on the authority of the physician who attended him, "a tremour prevaded his frame, his tongue was perched, and his mind sunk into delirium when not roused by conversation. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished." On the fourth day, July 21st, 1796, Robert Burns died.

On the 25th the remains of the poet were removed to the Trades' Hall, where they lay in

state till morning, and next day were interred with military honours, attended by a procession of the chief persons in the town and neighbourhood, and many from great distances. "The multitude," says an eye-witness who accompanied Burns to the grave, "went step by step with the chief mourners. They might amount to about ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard. It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks and persuasions, and opinions, mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys, and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled.***** I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend for ever. There was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on the coffin lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers fired three volleys. The earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the multitude stood gazing on the grave for some minutes' space, and then melted silently away."

A costly mausoleum has since been erected to the memory of the poet, on the highest point of ground in the church-yard, and thither the remains of Burns were solemnly transferred on the 5th June, 1815.