

SCOTLAND'S SKAITH;

OR

THE HISTORY

O'

*WILL & JEAN:*

AN OWRE TRUE TALE.

*SECOND EDITION.*

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So shall thy poverty come, as one that travelleth; and  
thy want as an armed man.      PROV.

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*WILL & JEAN.*

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WHA was ance like *Willie Gairlace*,  
Wha in neeboring town, or farm?  
Beauty's bloom shone in his fair face,  
Deadly strength was in his arm!

Wha wi' Will cou'd rin, or wrastle?  
Throw the sledge, or tofs the bar?  
Hap what wou'd, he stood a Castle  
Or for safety, or for war:

Warm his heart, and mild as manfu',  
Wi' the bauld, he bauld cou'd be;  
But to friends wha had their handfu'  
Purse and service aye ware free.

Whan' he first saw *Jeanie Miller*,  
Wha' wi' Jeanie cou'd compare?—  
Thousands had mair braws and filler,  
But war ony half fae fair?

Saft her smile raife like May morning,  
 Glinting owre *Demait* \* brow :  
 Sweet ! wi' opening charms adorning  
 STRIVLIN's lovely plain below !

Kind and gentle was her nature ;  
 At ilk place she bare 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 beaft ;  
 Flew like fire, and juft whan fa'ing  
 Kept her on his manly breast.

Light he bare her pale as ashes  
 Crofs the meadow fragrant, green !  
 Plac'd her on the new-mawn rafhes,  
 Watching fad her opening een.

Sic was *Will*, whan poor Jean fainting  
 Drapt into a lover's arms ;  
 Waken'd to his faft lamenting ;  
 Sigh'd, and blufh'd a thousand charms.

\* One of the Ochil Hills near Stirling.

Soon they loo'd, and soon war buckl'd ;  
 Nane took time to think and rue.—  
*Youth and worth and beauty cuppl'd ;*  
 Luvè 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 fair ; but aye wi' pleasure ;  
 Jean the hale day span and sang ;  
*Will and weans* her constant treasure,  
 Blest wi' them nae day seem'd 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.

Lucklefs was the hour whan Willie,  
 Hame returning frae the fair,  
 Ow'r-took *Tam* a neebour billie,  
 Sax miles frae their hame and mair,

Simmer's heat had loft its fury ;  
 Calmly fmil'd the sober e'en ;  
 Laffes on the bleachfield hurry  
 Skelping bare-fit owre the green ;

Labour rang wi' laugh and clatter,  
 Canty *Hairft* was juft begun,  
 And on mountain, tree and water  
 Glinted faft the fettin Sun.

Will and Tam wi' hearts a' lowpin  
 Mark'd the hale, but cou'd nae bide ;  
 Far frae hame, nae time for stoppin ;  
 Baith wifh'd for their ain fire fide.

On they travell'd, warm and drouthy,  
 Cracking owre the news in town,  
 The mair they crack'd, the mair ilk youth aye  
 Pray'd for drink to wafh news down.

*Fortune* wha but feldom liftens  
 To poor Merit's modeft pray'r ;  
 And on fools pours needlefs bleffings,  
 Harken'd to our drouthy pair.

In a Howm wha's bonny burnie  
Whimperin row'd its chryftal flood,  
Near the road whar trav'lers turn aye,  
Neat and bield a Cot-houfe stood.

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

Up the gavel end thick fpreading  
Crap the clafping Ivy green,  
Back owre firs the high craigs cleading  
Rais'd a' round a cozey fcreen.

Down below a flow'ry meadow  
Join'd the burnies winding line ;——  
Here it was, that *Howe* the widow  
This fam day, fet up her fign.

Brattling down the brae and near its  
Bottom, Will firft marvelin fees  
PORTER, ALE and *BRITISH SPIRITS*  
Painted bright between twa trees.

“ Godfake ! Tam, here’s walth for drinking ;—  
“ Wha can this new comer be ?——  
“ Hoot ! quo’ Tam there’s drouth in thinking—  
“ Let’s in, Will, and fyne we’ll fee.”

Nae mair time they took to speak or  
Think o’ ought but reaming jugs ;  
Till three times in humming liquor  
Ilk lad deeply laid his lugs.

Slockned now, refresh’d and talking,  
In cam Meg (weel skill’d to please)  
“ Sirs ! ye’re surely tyr’d wi’ walking ;——  
“ Ye maun taste my bread and cheefe.”

“ Thanks quo’ Will ;—I canna’ tarry,  
“ Pick mirk night is setting in,  
“ *Jean*, poor thing’s ! her lane and eery——  
“ I maun to the road and rin.”

Hoot ! quo’ Tam, what’s a’ the hurry ?  
Hame’s now, scarce a mile o’ gait——  
Come ! fit down—*Jean* winna wearie :  
Lord ! I’m sure it’s no fae late !



Will o'ercome wi' Tam's oration,  
 Baith fell to and ate their fill,——  
 “ Tam ! quo' Will in meer 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.*

Neibors 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, poor thing ! had lang been greetin ;  
 Will neist mornin blam'd *Tam Lowes,*  
 But ere lang, an owkly meetin  
 Was set up at *Maggie Howe's.*

Maist things hae a sma' beginnin,  
 But wha kens how things will end ?  
*Owkly* clubs are nae great finnin,  
 Gin folk hae enough to spend.

But nae man o' sober thinkin  
Ere will say that things can thrive  
If there's spent in owkly drinkin,  
What keeps wife and weans alive.

Drink maun aye hae *conversation*,  
Ilka social soul allows ;  
But in this *reformin' nation*,  
Wha can speak without the NEWS?

*News first* meant for state Physicians,  
Deeply skill'd in Courtly drugs :  
*Naw when a' are Politicians*,  
Just to fet folks by the lugs.

Maggie's club, wha cou'd get nae light  
On some things that shou'd be clear,  
Found ere lang the fau't, and ae night  
Clubb'd and gat the GAZETTEER \*.

\* The EDINBURGH GAZETTEER, a scandalous paper, evidently calculated to inflame the minds of the people against Government, by an insertion of gross falsehoods and misrepresentations.

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

Ilk ane's wifer than anither,——  
“ Things are no g'd'en right quo' Tam,  
“ Let us aftener meet thigither ;  
“ Twice a owk's no worth a d——n.”

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

Mid this fitting up and drinkin,  
Gathering a' the news that fell ;  
Will, wha was nae yet past thinkin,  
Had some battles wi' himsell.

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

Weel he saw her smother'd sorrow !  
Weel he saw her bleaching cheek !  
Mark'd the smile she strave to borrow  
Whan, poor thing, she cou'd nae speak !

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

But whan now that *nightly* meetings  
Sat and drank fra sax till twa ;  
Whan she found that hard earn'd gettings  
Now on drink war thrown awa ;

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

Saw him tyne his manly spirit,  
Healthy bloom, and sprightly ee ;  
And o' *luve* and *bame* grown wearit,  
Nightly fra his family flee ;

Wha could blame her heart's complaining ?

Wha condemn her sorrows meek ?

Or the tears that now ilk e'ning

Bleach'd her lately crimson'd cheek !

Will, wha lang had rued and swither'd,

(Aye agham'd o' past disgrace)

Mark'd the roses as they wither'd

Fast on Jeanie's lovely face !

Mark'd,—and felt wi' inward rackin'

A' the wyte lay wi' himsell,—

Swore neist night he'd mak a breakin,—

D——n'd the club and news to hell !

But alas ! whan *habit's rooted*;

Few hae pith the root to pu' ;

Will's resolves, war aye nonsuited,

*Promis'd* aye but aye gat fou.

Aye at first at the convening

Moraliz'd on what was right,—

Yet on clavers entertaining

Doz'd and drank till broad day light.

Things at length draw near an ending;  
 Cash rins out; Jean quite unhappy  
 Sees that Will is now past mending,  
 Tynes a' heart, and tak's a—*drappy*.

Ilka drink deserves a possey,  
*Port* maks men rude, *Claret* civil;  
*Beer* maks Britons stout and rosy,  
*Whisky* maks ilk wife—a Devil.

*Jane*, wha lately bare affliction  
 Wi' fae meek and mild an air,  
 School'd by Whisky, learns new tricks soon,  
 Flyts, and storms, and rugs Will's hair.

*Jane*, fae late the tenderest mither,  
 Fond o' ilk dear dauted wean!  
 Now, heart harden'd a'thegither  
 Skelps them round frae morn till e'en.

*Jane* wha vogie; loo'd to busk aye  
 In her hame spun, thrifty wark;  
 Now fells a' her braw's for Whiskie  
 To her last gown, coat and fark!

*Rabby Burns*, in mony a ditty  
Loudly sings in whisky's praise ;  
Sweet his fang—the mair's the pity,  
E'er on it he war'd sic lays.

O' a' the ills poor Caledonia  
E'er yet pree'd, or e'er will taste,  
Brew'd in Hell's black Pandemonia,  
*Whiskie's* ill will skaith her maist !

“ Wha was ance like *Willie Gairlace* ?  
“ Wha in neeboring town or farm ?  
“ Beauty's bloom shone in his fair face,  
“ Deadly strength was in his arm !

“ Whan he first saw *Jeanie Miller*,  
“ Wha wi' *Jeanie* cou'd compare ?  
“ Thousands had mair brows and filler,  
“ But ware ony half fae fair ?”

See them now—how chang'd wi' *drinking* !  
A' their youthfu' beauty gane !—  
Daver'd, doited, daiz'd and blinkin ;  
Worn to perfect skin and bane !

In the cauld month o' November  
    (*Claise, 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 ta'en on to be a sodger,  
    She wi' weans to beg her bread !

*O' a' the ills poor Caledonia*  
    *E'er yet pree'd, or e'er will taste,*  
*Brew'd in Hell's black Pandemonia,*  
    *WHISKY'S ill will skaith her maist !*