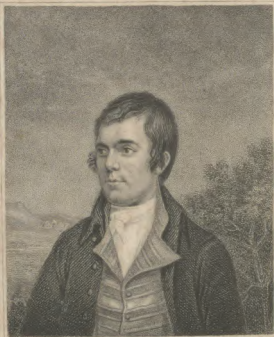




BURN'S MONUMENT
ON THE BANKS OF THE DOON

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of No. 10, the B. B. B.

J. B. B. B. B.

BURNS.

THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS:

CONTAINING
HIS POEMS, LETTERS, SONGS,
His Letters to Clarinda,
AND
THE WHOLE OF HIS SUPPRESSED POEMS:
WITH
AN ESSAY
ON
HIS LIFE, GENIUS, AND CHARACTER.

London:
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PREFACE.

THE present Edition of the *WORKS* of BURNS was undertaken with the view of presenting the Public with a Collection more extensively formed, more copiously illustrated, and less expensive in the purchase, than any that has yet appeared.

In comparing it with others, it will be found to possess several advantages.

I. It contains an *Essay* on the *Life*, *Genius*, and *Character* of the Author, in which the vicissitudes of his fortune are recorded, and his memory defended against the malignity of hypocrisy and envy.

II. A new and complete *Analysis* (in the *Table of Contents*) of his *Letters* to several Persons, to *Clarinda*, and to *George Thomson*.

III. The whole of his genuine suppressed *Poems* and *Letters*. These spirited and happy effusions, so replete with irony and satire, with fire and tenderness, have hitherto appeared only in pamphlets or temporary publications.

IV. A correct and authentic *Text*, in the preparation and superintendence of which, recourse has been had to the earliest copies, so as to unite fullness with accuracy, and to furnish a standard Exemplar of a standard Work.

V. An *Appendix*, chiefly poetical, illustrative of several Passages in his Writings.

Of an Edition thus augmented and improved, it is not necessary to say more. Should its utility be acknowledged, the Editor will consider his exertions sufficiently rewarded.

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ESSAY
ON THE
LIFE, GENIUS, AND CHARACTER
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JUSTICE has not hitherto been rendered either to the genius, the conduct, or the character of Burns. Born in a humble station in life, he suffered all the hardships incident to a state of poverty. The highest efforts of his mind, in which the tide of intellectual greatness seemed to flow in deep and exhaustless channels, failed to soften the avarice of the rich, or to raise him above the prospect of perpetual toil. Like his native and lonely hills, he existed in solitary barrenness, subject to every blast, and exposed naked and bare to every tempest. The boldness, the loftiness of view, the towering of the spirit that was within him, only laid him more open to the raging of the elements. No refreshing showers came to rest upon his head, or to pour fertility into his bosom. He was an elevated point round which the storm clung and gathered; a prominent rock, condemned by Nature to endure the buffeting of the surge. Yet, amidst the bitter waters of indignance and sorrow, of drudgery and neglect, he bore himself loftily to the world. His soul was wrong but not subdued. He yielded; but it was to a hand that was irresistible.

He fell like the oak of the forest. He was uprooted from his place, and stretched with all his branches on the earth.

His death, which suppressed in some bosoms all resentment, increased in others a hatred already furious, deadly, and inextinguishable. The grave afforded him no sanctuary. The obscurity of his birth was revived against him as a crime. His convivial habits, and his wit and humour, were perverted into habitual dissipation and impiety. His social talents were tortured into a neglect of every moral duty; his memory was loaded with the most odious imputations; and when malignity had apparently exhausted its venom, he was charged with cowardice, with attempting to commit murder, and afterwards suicide!

We shall not stop at present to inquire into the motives which produced calumnies so false and so atrocious. It is in the nature of some minds to envy what they cannot equal, and to endeavour to destroy what places them in a state of hopeless inferiority. We shall advert to

them when we enter into the consideration of his genius and character. Let us attend, in the meantime, to the mournful vicissitudes of his life, and the singular asperities of his fortune.

Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January 1759, in a small cottage near the banks of the Doon, about two miles from Ayr. The chief incidents of his life are related by himself in a letter to Dr. Moore. In this document, and in several passages of his correspondence, he supplies much valuable information. His narrative is brief, vigorous, and characteristic. We shall therefore copy his language and his sentiments; and add, from other sources, the progress and termination of his career.

"For some months past," says he, "I have been rambling over the country; but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits in this miserable fog of *ennui*, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, except in the trifling affair of *wisdom*, I sometimes think I resemble—I have, I say, like him, *turned my eye to behold madmen and folly*, and, like him, too frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.....

"After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the Author wrote them under

some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

"I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a *gentleman*. When at Edinburgh, last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's Office; and looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

.....My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the Flood.

Gules, purple, argent, &c. quite disown me.

"My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, who rented lands of the noble Keiths of Marischal, and had the honour of sharing their fate. I do not use the word *honour* with any reference to political principles. *Loyal* and *disloyal*, I take to be merely relative terms, in that ancient and formidable court, known in this country by the name of *Club-law*, where the *right* is always with the *strongest*. But those who dare welcome ruin, and shake hands with infamy, for what they sincerely believe to be the cause of their God, or their king, are, as Mark Antony says, in *Shakspeare*, of Brutus and Cassius, *honourable men*. I mention this circumstance, because it threw my father upon the world at large.

"After many years' wanderings and sojournings he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood *men*, *their manners*, and *their ways*, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility,

are disqualifying circumstances; consequently I was born a very poor man's son.

"For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was a gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

"At those years I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiotic plety. I say *idiotic* plety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the school-master some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles.

"In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrips, ghosts, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect upon my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors.

"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was *The Flier of Mirna*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,

How are thy servants blest, O Lord!

I particularly remember one half stanza, which was music to my boyish ear—

For though on dreadful whirls we hang
High on the broken wave—

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school books.

"The two first books 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 bag-pipe, 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 are shut in eternal rest.

"Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half-mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c. used, a few years afterwards, to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me which has not ceased to this hour.

"My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our Catechism-definition of infinitude, "without bounds or limits." I formed several connections with other youngsters who possessed superior advantages, the youngling actors, who were busy in the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to

appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were perhaps born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the *clutterly* appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books. Among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one whose heart I am sure not even the *Mummy Begum* scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils.

"My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of *The Two Dogs*. My father was advanced in life when he married. I was the eldest of seven children; and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom from his lease in two years more; and to weather these two years we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman, for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert) who could drive very well, and help me to thresh 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 scoundrelly factor's insolent, threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

"This kind of life--the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom--she was a *bannie, sweet, sensie lass*. In short she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, glau-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below.

"How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. You medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an *Æolian* harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rattan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles.

"Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song, which was said to be composed by a small

country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

"Thus with me began love and poetry, which at times have been my only, and, till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease; otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years toiling and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

"It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish. No *relais* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from *Salmon's* and *Cutler's* geographical grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from *The Spectator*. These, with *Pope's Works*, some plays of *Shakspeare*, *Tull* and *Dickson on Agriculture*, *The Pantheon*, *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*, *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, *Jardine's British Gardener's Directory*, *Boyle's Lectures*, *Allan Ramsay's Works*,

Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, and *Hervey's Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender or sublime from affectation and fastian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

"In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repeat, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions. From that instance of disobedience in me he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years: I say, dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence.

"The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune, was the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it. The last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance.

"Thus abandoned of aim or view in

life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy, or hypochondriacism, that made me fly from solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always where two or three met together, there was I among them.

"But far beyond all other impulses of my heart was *un penchant a l'admirable melle du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. 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 labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart.

"A country lad seldom carries on a love-adventure without an assisting confidant. 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 of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my competitors, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of

science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of Follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty, they are matters of the most serious nature. To them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

"Another circumstance in my life, which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialing, &c. in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind.

"The contraband trade was at that time very successful; and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my *sine* and *co-sine* for a few days more; but, stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a

mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

" I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of *Thomson's* and *Shenstone's* Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wife of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the compositions of most of my correspondents, flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

" My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Pleasure*, *et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure. *Sterne* and *McKenzie*, *Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling* were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour.

" I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand. I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet. None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except *Winter a Dirge*, the eldest of my printed pieces; *The Death of poor Mallie*; *John*

Barlycorn; and songs first, second, and third.* Song second was the abolition of that passion which ended the fore-mentioned school business.

" My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My; and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new-year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes; and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

" I was obliged to give up this scheme. The clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption. To crown my distresses, a *belleville*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The flashing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*Depart from me, ye accursed!*

" From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education,

* These were—When Guildford good our piles stood—It was upon a Lammas night—Now waulin' winks, and laugh'ring guns.

with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding that he is at this time master of a large West-Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

"His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded. I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world^a was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief; and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote *The Poet's Welcome*.^b

"My reading only increased while in this town, by two stray volumes of *Pamela*, and one of *Ferdinand Count Falstaff*, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with *Ferguson's Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour.

"When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift

to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my half-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense and every sober qualification he was far my superior.

"I entered on this farm with a full resolution—*Come, go to, I will be wise!* I read farming books—I calculated crops—I attended markets—and in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man. But the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overcast all my wisdom; and I returned, *Like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire*.

"I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring^c that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatic persons* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause.

"*Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the Kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me, on another side, within point blank shot of their heaviest

^a The Epistle beginning—*Thou's welcome, wean, misbamer fa' me.*

^c The Two Hards.

metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, *The Lament*. This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother—in truth it was only nominally mine—and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my Poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power. I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable climate, and gone to the world of spirits. I can truly say, that *paucare lacrimas* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour.

"It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone—I balanced myself with others—I watched every means of information to see how much ground I occupied as a man and a poet—I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation, where the lights and shades in my character were intended—I was pretty confident my Poems would meet with some applause—but at worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect.

which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

"I had been for some days sculking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels.* I had taken the last farewell of my few friends—my chest was on the road to Greenock—I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*—when a letter† from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.

"The Doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single

* This was to oblige him to find security for the maintenance of his twin-children. His proposition of remaining at home and providing for his wife and family by his daily labour, was rejected with scorn. The jealousy of the parents of Miss Armour, notwithstanding her poverty and improvidence, anticipated a better connexion than that of the friendless and unhappy Poet. They prevailed upon her to destroy the papers relating to her private marriage; and treated her lover with cruelty or indifference, till the fortunate change in his circumstances induced them to court his society.

† I threw off six hundred copies, of

† See APPENDIX.

acquaintance or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the earl of Glencairn.*

He arrived at Edinburgh in November, 1786. In a few days he became an object of general curiosity and admiration. His Poems attracted the notice of the Editors of the *Leainger*; and the ninety-seventh Number of that work was devoted to an account of his situation in life, with extracts from his Poems. After quoting various passages, in which he observed "with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered condition, had looked on men and manners," Mr. Mackenzie concluded with an eloquent appeal to the liberality of the public. "To repair," said he, "the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride." These encomiums gave him a still greater degree of publicity. His society was courted by all ranks; and he frequently received from female beauty and elegance those attentions above all others the most grateful to him. Men of the highest pretensions and affluence subscribed for the New Edition of his Poems; and if their generosity had been equal to their ostentation, he might have been rendered independent for life. But this was an exertion of virtue to which they laid no claim.

During the period that he resided among them "his manners were manly,

simple, and independent; strongly impressive of conscious genius and worth; but without any thing that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities."²

This propriety of demeanour, however, was not always met by corresponding feelings. Some individuals invited him to their tables, not as a man of genius, but as a prodigy. Others solicited his company that they might enjoy the spectacle of his inebriation, and afterwards insult him for the intemperance which they had urged. He was sometimes exposed to humiliation from the pride of learning, or the insolence which superiority of fortune incites. The nobility and gentry requested him to join in the entertainments of their festive hours; but they could never forgive him for having been born in a cottage, and receiving his education among the lower orders of the people. They set their features to a semblance of friendship; but the hideous forms of pride and hypocrisy lay rankling in their hearts.

To these mortifications he opposed contempt or indifference. "When Dr. Blair," says he, "neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, What do I care for him or his pomp either?" The studied neglect of nobility excited more bitter sensations. "The noble Glencairn," says

* Dr. Stewart.

he, "has wounded me to the soul. He shewed so much attention—engrossing attention—one day, to the only block-head at table (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself), that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook me by the hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting. God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day."

It may be considered one of the greatest infelicities of the life of Burns that he was ever introduced into such society. The *literati* had indeed a character among themselves and the vulgar for learning and talent; but they were in reality the mere university men of the day. No friendship could subsist between them and a man who had nothing to recommend him but his genius and integrity. They guarded against the too frequent repetition of his visits; prudently considering, that as he had nothing to give, he might end by asking for something. Yet they sometimes attempted to flatter and entertain him; but neither their blandishments nor their dissimulation escaped his notice. "When the hollow-hearted wretch," says Burns, "takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; and the proud man's wine so offends my palate, that it chokes me in the gullet."

He viewed the calumny of the envious with less resentment than a cordiality so perfidious. On being told that a certain individual had dwelt with studied malignity on his connexion with the female on whom he had placed his affections, he merely expressed his surprise that a person with the least pretensions to the manners of a gentleman should stoop to such meanness. "I am," said he, "too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion; but reverence to God, and

integrity to my fellow-creatures I hope I shall always observe."

The fate of Fergusson in the meantime presented itself to his mind; and the calamities of that unfortunate poet suggested a dread of his own melancholy destiny. He raised a simple stone over his grave, which was distinguished by no mark of respect, and inscribed an Epitaph, worthy of himself and of the man whom he lamented.

Shortly after, having acquired, by the new edition of his Poems, a sum of money more than sufficient for his present exigencies, he determined to gratify a desire he had long entertained, of visiting some of the most interesting districts of his native country. With this view, he left Edinburgh on the sixth of May; and in the course of his journey visited the pastoral scenery on the banks of the Tweed, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Nith. Returning through Annan and Dumfries to Ayrshire, he arrived at Mossiel on the eighth of June.

It may easily be conceived with what pleasure he was received by his family after an absence of six months, in which his prospects had undergone such a favourable change. He was now comparatively high in reputation, and improved in circumstances. His ardent affections were unaltered; and he was ready to share with them the limited reward that fortune had bestowed.

After remaining a few days at home, he proceeded to Edinburgh; and immediately set out on a tour to the West Highlands. From this journey he again returned to Ayrshire, where he spent the month of July.

In August he paid another visit to Edinburgh, whence, in the course of the same month, he made an excursion, in

company with Mr. Adair, to view the banks of the Forth, and its romantic tributary the Devon. He returned with his friend by Kilaross and Queensferry.

These journeys, however, did not satisfy his curiosity. About the beginning of September he again set out on a more extended tour to the north. He passed through the heart of the Highlands; stretched ten miles beyond Inverness; and bending his course eastward, across the island, returned by the shore of the German ocean. He remained at the metropolis during the greatest part of the winter. It was during this period that he wrote his celebrated *Letters to Clarinda*.

In February 1790, he settled with his publisher, and found himself master of four hundred pounds, including one hundred for copy-right.* With this sum he hastened to Ayrshire, and immediately advanced *one hundred and eighty* to his brother Gilbert, who had undertaken to

* It is difficult to ascertain the motive which induced Dr. Currie to assert, that Burns "received from his Poems a clear profit of about nine hundred pounds." Its effect, however, was to insinuate the prodigality of the Poet, and to impress the "patrons of genius" with an elevated idea of their own liberality. Now the Doctor knew the contrary to be the fact. The number of subscribers was about 1500; the price of the book was 6s.; and to the few individuals who put down their names for more than this poetry sum, Burns thought it incumbent on him to send copies to the amount. The simplest calculation will show that such a limited sale could not possibly produce more than the sum mentioned in the text, on the authority of the Poet himself. The expense of paper and printing might be 100l., though Wilson of Ayr offered to supply a second edition of 1000 copies for 43l. If we add to this, 50l. for incidental expenses, the total will be 150l. On the other hand, the produce of the whole impression at full price, and of the copy-right, will be 550l. If we subtract the one from the other, instead of 1000l. the residuum will be only 400l.

support their aged mother, and who was struggling with many difficulties in the form of Mossgiel. His generous heart next turned to the object of his attachment; and he entered into a permanent union with the mother of his children. "Her happiness or misery," said he, "was in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit!"

With little more than two hundred pounds, a wife, and a young family, he was now to begin the world. He was at first perplexed how to proceed. He hesitated between returning to the plough, and soliciting the interest of his friends to get him a situation in the excise. At length the idea of being placed above daily toil preponderated. "If I were very sanguine," said he, "I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury warrant for supervisor or surveyor-general."

Under this impression he addressed himself to Mr. Graham of Fintry. "I intended," said he, "to have closed my last appearance on the stage of life in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and paternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last, and often best friend, rescued him."

He wrote in a similar strain to the Earl of Glencairn; but his applications, instead of stirring them up to make some honourable provision for him, only procured an employment which required the strongest efforts of virtue to neutralize its contagion. A commission was drawn up, appointing him to the situation of a gauger!

Burns now discovered the extent of what he had to hope from the patronage

of the great. "I never," he observed, "thought mankind very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit with my species. The many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have, in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them! they are almost all of them of such frail con-texture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune."

To fortify himself against the indifference of friends and the hostility of enemies, he had recourse to a singular expedient. "I have bought," said he, "a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity—the intrepid, unyielding independence—the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage—Satan."

His proud nature, like that of the unfortunate hero of Milton, could not sink at once into a station so ignoble and degrading. He therefore took the farm of Ellisland, resolving, if possible, to provide for his family in a way more congenial to his feelings. "The commission lies by me," said he, with a mixture of scorn and humility, "and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed."

In June, 1783, he once more entered into the sphere of humble and laborious life, without any other prospect than constant personal labour, and a frugality approaching to extreme penury. "The heart of the man," said he, "and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations for which I live. If miry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul

immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once; and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grub: not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time."

The dwelling-house on his farm, being inadequate to the accommodation of his family, he began to erect another. On this occasion he engaged at times in the occupation of a labourer. Pleased with surveying the grounds he was about to cultivate, and with rearing a habitation for his wife and children, sentiments of a more cheering nature buoyed up his mind; and a few days passed away, the most tranquil perhaps of his life.

His fame drew upon him the attention of his neighbours, and he soon formed an estimate of their character. "I am here (Sept. 3.) busy with my harvest," said he; "but for all that pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose, they only know in graces, prayers, &c.; and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the Muses—they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a Poet."

His industry was frequently interrupted by visiting his wife and children in Ayrshire; and it was not till the end of January, 1784, that his house at Ellisland was prepared for their reception. They joined him a few days after.

He had now sufficient experience of his farm to foresee that it would prove a ruinous concern. He therefore applied to the commissioners of excise to be employed, and his appointment was made

out for the district in which Ellisland was situated.

It was with difficulty he could reconcile himself to his new occupation. "I do not know," said he, in writing to Mr. Ainslie, "how the word *exciseman*, or the still more opprobrious term, *guager*, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations."

He soon discovered the impossibility of uniting the labour of agriculture with the business of the excise. His farm was in a great measure abandoned to his servants while he was engaged in his official duties. He might indeed be seen now and then in the spring, directing his plough, or scattering the grain in the earth. But his farm no longer occupied the principal part of his thoughts. It was not at Ellisland that he was now in general to be found. Mounted on horseback, he was drodging after the defaulters of the revenue among the hills and vales of Nithsdale. "I am now," said he, "a poor rascally guager, condemned to gallop at least two hundred miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels!"

His time was now completely occupied. To Dr. Anderson, who requested his assistance for a publication in which he was engaged, he replied, "Alas! Sir, you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserably hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grinding-stone of excise; and, like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

Besides his duties in the excise, other circumstances interfered with his attention to his farm. He engaged in the formation and management of a society for purchasing and circulating books among the farmers of his neighbourhood; and frequently occupied himself in composing songs for the musical work* of Mr. Johnson, then in the course of publication. These employments, though useful in themselves, and advantageous to those for whom he laboured, necessarily contributed to the abstraction of his thoughts, and the neglect of his own affairs.

The consequences may easily be imagined. He found it requisite, after the experience of three years and a half, to relinquish his lease. His stock and the produce of his lands were sold by public auction; and the reward of his genius was swallowed up in the claims of his landlord.

His employment in the excise had originally produced fifty pounds per annum; and his conduct having met with the approbation of the Board of Commissioners, he was appointed to a new district, the emoluments of which rose to seventy. Hoping to support himself and his family on this humble income till promotion should reach him, he removed to a small house in Dumfries, about the end of the year 1791.

But circumstances occurred which prevented the fulfilment of this anticipation. The early events of the French revolution interested the feelings of many. They imagined that superstition and tyranny were about to terminate their career; and Burns, though a Jacobite and a Cavalier, participated in their expecta-

To do what yet though damn'd I would
abhor!"

* "The Scots Musical Museum," a work intended to unite the Music and the Songs of Scotland in one general collection.

tions. He did not attempt to conceal his sentiments; but spoke of the happiness which seemed dawning upon mankind with a freedom incompatible with his dependent situation. Even after the transitory illusion had passed away, and the reign of anarchy and blood had commenced, he could not immediately withdraw his partial gaze from a people who had so lately breathed the sentiments of liberty and peace.

Information of this was given to the Board of Excise, with the exaggerations so general in such cases; and had not Mr. Graham, of Fintry, interfered in his behalf, "he would have been turned adrift," as he himself observes, "*without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, to all the horrors of want!*"

"Had I had any other resource," said he, in a letter to a friend, "I probably might have saved them the trouble of a dismission; but the little money I gained by my publication is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother," who, though one of the wealthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men."

When he stood forth to defend himself against the accusations of his enemies, he was told that "his business was to act, not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for him to be silent and obedient." He was given to understand, at the same time, that his promotion was deferred, and must depend on his future behaviour.

This circumstance made a deep impression on his mind. Fame heightened his misfortune, and represented him as actually dismissed from his situation;

* Gilbert. His brother William died in London a short time before.

and this report induced Mr. Erskine, of Mar, to propose a subscription in his favour. He refused the offer in a letter* of great elevation of sentiment, in which he gives an account of the whole transaction, and defends himself against the imputation of disloyalty, and the calumny of having made submissions, for the sake of his office, unworthy of his character.

During the remaining three years of his life his leisure was wholly devoted to the success of a musical publication, projected by George Thomson, of Edinburgh. The songs which he furnished include nearly all he wrote during this period, and many of his happiest efforts in this species of composition.

In 1795, when the nature of the public affairs was supposed to call for a general arming of the people, he entered the ranks of the Dumfries Volunteers, and employed his poetical powers in stimulating their patriotism†.

Though by nature of an athletic form, his constitution was rather delicate than robust. The hard labour and sufferings of the early part of his life produced a depression of spirits which disappointment afterwards contributed to augment. He had, besides, a disposition to headache, and violent and irregular palpitations of the heart.

His personal appearance now began to decline; and though his appetite continued unimpaired, he was himself sensible that his constitution was sinking. He was no longer capable of those incessant mental exertions which he had hitherto made; and he reposed for a few months from the unprofitable drudgery of

* To John Francis Erskine, Esq. of Mar, 15th April, 1795.

† See p. 205.

composing for musical collections. This suspension of his labours greatly alarmed Mr. Thomson; for he had already received seventy of his exquisite lyrics gratuitously. "Am I never," said he, "to hear from you again? I know and I fear how much you have been afflicted of late; but I trust that returning health will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish 'married to immortal verse.'"¹

In January, 1796, he was confined to his bed by a severe attack of rheumatism. His appetite began to fail; his hand shook, and his voice faltered on any exertion or emotion. His pulse became weaker and more rapid, and pain in the larger joints, and in the hands and feet, deprived him of the enjoyment of refreshing sleep.

In this distressing situation, he employed his intervals of ease in writing to his friends, not to inform them of his destitute condition, but to tell them that he must shortly die. But Burns had no friends. Although his illness, his poverty, and his wants were generally known, no one proposed any measure for his relief. Mrs. Dunlop, a peevish old woman, whom his poetry had dispossessed of an evil spirit,² and whom he had uniformly

treated with filial tenderness, deserted him in his hour of need. "Alas! Madam," said he, in writing to her a third time, without receiving an answer, "I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. I can ill afford at this time to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. What sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess."

Some months after, finding himself getting worse, he informed Mr. Thomson of the circumstance. "Alas! my dear Thomson," said he, "I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again. 'By Babel's streams I have sat and wept,' almost ever since I wrote you last. I have only known existence by the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain. Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Ferguson—

"Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven,
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"³

This moving picture of suffering made no impression on Mr. Thomson. A generous heart, unaltered by any previous debt of gratitude, would have delighted to solace his sinking spirits, to minister to his necessities, and to merit the blessing of him that was ready to perish. But this man, though overwhelmed with a load of obligation, felt no other emotion than that which was expressed by a cold wish for his recovery, and a hope that he would "then see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to his family, to his friends, and to the world."

On the fourth of June, a lady of a similar disposition advised him to go to the

¹ This took place in 1796. She invited him to her house; and a correspondence afterwards took place between them, which ended only with his life. It was not, however, without its interruptions. She sometimes accused him of want of reverence for religion, and sometimes expressed her displeasure at his political sentiments. "On other occasions she charged him with having ridiculed her. At last, she ceased to answer him at all. The assertion of Dr. Currie, that he received a satisfactory explanation of her silence previous to his death, requires confirmation. It is a suspicious circumstance that none of her letters have been published. The Doctor perhaps, out of tenderness to her memory, committed them to the flames.

birth-day assembly to shew his loyalty.

"Madam," replied he, "I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatism, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam—"Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy me Israel!" Would you have me, in such circumstances, to copy you out a love song?"

It had been hoped by some of his friends, that if he could live through the months of spring, the succeeding season might restore him. But they were disappointed. The genial warmth of the sun infused no vigour into his frame. He was advised to try the effect of sea-bathing; and for that purpose he went to Broom, in Annandale, about ten miles east of Dumfries, on the shore of the Solway-frith.

Shortly after his arrival here (4th July), he apologised to Mr. Johnson for his inability to assist him as he wished in the completion of his *Collection of the Music and Songs of his country*. "You may probably think," said he, "that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia. You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the Poet to far other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of

sentiment. However, *Deus* is the cardinal of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can."

On the 5th, Mrs. Riddell of Glenriddell, who resided in the neighbourhood, and with whom he was formerly acquainted, invited him to dinner; and, as he was unable to walk, she sent her carriage for him to the cottage where he lodged. As he entered her apartment she perceived the stamp of death imprinted on his features. His first salutation was, "Well, Madam, have you any commands for the other world?" He ate little, and complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness and feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon. His anxiety for his family hung heavy on his mind; and when he alluded to their approaching desolation, his heart was touched with grief.

On the 7th, he found it necessary to write to Mr. Cunningham to exert his influence to secure him from losing half of his income. "Alas! my friend," said he, "I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair;—my spirits fled! fled! The deuce of the matter is this—when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to thirty-five pounds instead of seventy. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country-quarters—with a wife and five children at home, on thirty-five pounds? I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our Commissioners of Excise to grant me the full salary. I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poète*. If I die not of disease, I shall perish with hunger!"

In addition to his sufferings from indigence and neglect, he was incessantly dunned by a heartless creditor. To relieve himself from his importunity, he applied to Mr. Thomson (14th July) for a trifling sum. "After all my boasted independence," said he, "curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half-distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the sweetest song genius you have seen. Forgive me! Forgive me!"

On the same day he addressed a letter to Mrs. Dunlop. "I have written you so often," said he, "without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness, which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that 'bourn whence no traveller returns.' Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!"

This affecting adieu was received with the same indifference as his previous communications; and was, like them, thought unworthy of a reply. Mr. Thomson paid more respect to appearances. When he perceived that Burns implored five pounds, not on account of all that he had done, but of something more which

he was willing to perform, he transmitted the paltry sum, with an assurance that he had been "*ruminating for three months* how to alleviate his sufferings, and that the amount requested was *the very sum he proposed sending!*"

It is painful to think, that the abilities of Burns, though they procured riches and independence to others, were never of any real advantage to himself. It has been well observed, "that he found men willing to receive his labour without reward, because they knew not the delicacy of rewarding a man of his ardent character; or who insulted while they pretended to reward—that though he was flattered, courted, and admired by the rich, the learned, the witty, and the proud, he could obtain no higher office, no greater security against want, no ampler provision for his wife and family, than an exciseman's place of *fifty*, and afterwards *seventy* pounds a-year—that when he lay on the bed of sickness and death, sollicitation was needful to secure him from losing half of his scanty stipend—and that when the agonies of dissolution were almost upon him, the horrors of a jail compelled his high mind to beg the loan of five pounds to preserve him from being dragged, half-dying, to a prison. Yes! and the man who had for years received the finest productions of his genius—the man who had enriched himself by his labours—the man who once, and only once, offered to remunerate him by *five pounds*—that man to whom the Poet's dying prayer was made, poorly contented himself with sending *just* the sum demanded, though he knew it was predestined to discharge a debt, and that his unhappy friend (if the name may be profaned) must still feel the same agonies of mind. This person has not blushed to publish the affecting letter of the expiring Bard, with the memorial of his own penurious conduct. That Burns was reduced to such a humiliation must

for ever call forth our pity—that his humiliation was so answered, must excite sentiments of indignation and contempt in every manly, every liberal bosom.”

The sordidness of Mr. Thomson did not end here. He must have known and felt that his conduct was mean, selfish, and ungenerous; but instead of yielding to emotions of contrition or remorse, he increased his injustice by the most insulting proposition that ever was made to a dying man. “Pray, my good Sir,” said he, “is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry! If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the mean time, it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the *Diad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive.” Burns made no reply. The acuteness of his sufferings prevented him from noticing this inhuman mockery of speculating avarice.

About this time, he wrote a poetical epistle to Colonel de Peyster, in answer to the inquiries of that gentleman after his health. A slight tendency to profuseness, mixed with ludicrous imagery, may be observed in its composition. This might be the effect of the kindness of his nature; for he never could be brought to view the Devil with the hatred or abhorrence of the pious. If, in early life, he succeeded in claiming our pity for such an enemy, he would not at a more mature age have any great dread of his power. He was therefore left in “the camp of the unconverted,” and exempt from the

intrusion of the sullen superstition, and hateful hypocrisy of those whom he had always ridiculed or despised.

At first he imagined that bathing in the sea had been of benefit to him. The pains in his limbs were relieved; but this was immediately followed by a new attack of fever.

When brought back to his own house in Dumfries (18th July), he was no longer able to stand upright. The destitute situation of his wife and family preyed deeply on his spirits, and imparted incessant shocks to a frame already exhausted. Yet he alluded to his poverty, at times, with something approaching to his wonted gaiety. “What business,” said he to Mr. Maxwell, who attended him, “has a physician to waste his time on me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough to carry me to my grave.” At this time a tremor pervaded his frame. His tongue was parched; and, when not roused by conversation, his mind sunk into a kind of torpor. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished. On the fourth, his sufferings were terminated.

He left a widow and four sons. The ceremonial of his interment took place on the 20th of July.* It was accompanied

* “The day was a fine one,” says Allan Cunningham, “the sun was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this—not from any concurrence in the common superstition—that ‘happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,’ but to confuse a pious fraud of a religious Magazine, which made Heaven express its wrath at the interment of a profane Poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain. I know not who wrote the story, and I do not wish to know; but its utter falsehood thousands can attest. It is one proof out of many, how divine wrath is feigned by dishonest zeal in a common commotion of the elements, and that men, whose profession is godliness and truth, will look in the face of Heaven and tell a deliberate lie.”

by the volunteers of Dumfries, the fencible infantry of Ayrshire, and the regiment of cavalry of the Cinque Ports. On the same day Mrs. Burns was delivered of a son, who did not long survive his father.

Burns was nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, bespoke uncommon capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardour and intelligence. His face was well formed; and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. His mode of dressing, and a certain fulness and bend in his shoulders, characteristic of his original profession, disguised, in some degree the natural symmetry of his form. His physiognomy had an expression of deep penetration, and of calm thoughtfulness, approaching to melancholy.

His manner and address bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents. His conversation was extremely fascinating; rich in wit, humour, whim, and occasionally in serious and apposite reflection. In the society of men of taste he was eloquent and impressive. But it was in female circles that his powers of expression displayed their utmost force. A Scottish lady,* accustomed to the best society, declared, with characteristic *naïveté*, that no man's conversation *ever carried her so completely off her feet* as that of Burns; and an English lady, particularly acquainted with the most distinguished characters of the day, remarked that there was a charm about him in his social hours that she had never seen equalled.

He was no less amiable in all the relations of private life. As a husband, he was tender and indulgent; as a father, attentive and kind; and, as a friend, so

views of selfishness ever made him faithful to those whom he had once honoured with that name; and if, at any time, he was forced by insult or disgust to turn aside from them, his resentment died away under the influence of pity and forgiveness. As a citizen, he never neglected a single duty. Although so poor as frequently to be on the brink of ruin, looking forward, now to the situation of a foot-soldier, now to that of a common beggar, as no improbable consummation of his evil fortune, he was as proud and independent as if he had possessed a princely revenue. Neither the influence of the low-minded crowd around him, nor the privations which he endured, ever led him to incur the burden of pecuniary obligation. No chicanery, no sordidness ever appeared in his conduct. Even in the midst of distress, while his feeling heart sunk under the secret consciousness of indigence, and the apprehensions of absolute want, he bore himself loftily to the world. Though he possessed an acuteness of discrimination, and a command of language that might have guided the councils of nations, and which would have been eagerly courted by any party, he would have perished by famine rather than have submitted to the degradation of being the tool of a faction. He had an elevation of sentiment that raised him above the idea of being a mercenary even in what he considered a good cause; nor were his laurels ever stained by a single act of venality. Through the whole of his life he had to maintain a hard struggle with care, and often laboured under those depressions to which genius is subject; yet his spirit never stooped from its high career, and to the very end of his warfare with himself and with fortune, continued strong in his independence.

Yet with all the nobility of his mind, the kindness and generosity of his nature, and the supremacy of his genius, his false

* The late Duchess of Gordon.

has been unusually severe. The same fatality that attended him through life, pursued him beyond the grave. His manuscripts unfortunately fell into the hands of Dr. Currie, a man of narrow intellect, and a relation of Mrs. Dunlop. Not satisfied with mutilating some of his best productions, and suppressing others, he seized on every opportunity of undervaluing his powers, of viewing him as a prodigy to whom the notice of the opulent was an honour, and of dwelling with complacency on what he called the lowness of his birth and education. Under the mask of benevolence to his family, he stabbed his reputation with certainty and security. He charged him at one time with licentiousness; at another he belated at circumstances which never took place, and then stopped short as if unwilling to expose the crimes or the frailties of his author. Sometimes he invented a story; and pretending that he had the proof in his own hands, quoted several passages of his writings; at others he questioned his right to the character of a poet, and described his versification as generally rude and inharmonious. When he applauded, his panegyrics were sparing and invidious; and when he mixed the slang of his profession with the uncertainty of surmise, the drug was nauseous and disgusting.

The successors of this faithless Editor, have not only echoed his misrepresentations, but added to his calumnies. Walter Scott, in an article in the *Quarterly Review*, brands him with cowardice, with attempting to commit murder, and afterwards suicide. "Burns," says this heavy drudge of fiction and flattery, "was a gladiator, untinged with the slightest shade of that spirit of chivalry which, since the feudal times, has pervaded the higher ranks of European society. The *jeuneur* of his birth and habits of society prevented rules of punctilious delicacy from forming any part of his education; nor did he, it would seem, see any thing

so rational in the practice of duelling as afterward to adopt or to affect the sentiments of the *higher ranks* upon that subject. On this point, therefore, the pride and high spirit of Burns differed from those of the world around him. He wanted that chivalrous sensibility of honour which places reason on the sword's point. He was utterly inaccessible to all friendly advice. To lay before him his errors, or to point out their consequences, was to touch a string that jarred every feeling within him. On such occasions, his, like Churchill's, was

The mind which, starting, heaves the heart-felt groan,
And hanes the form she knows to be her own.

"It is a dreadful truth, that when racked and tortured by the well-meant and warm expostulations of an intimate friend, he at last started up in a paroxysm of frenzy, and drawing a sword-cane, which he usually wore, made an attempt to plunge it into the body of his adviser. The next instant he was with difficulty withheld from suicide."

..... *Hic nigra succus heliginis; hæc est
Æreæ metæ.*

The friend here referred to was Mr. John Syme, who thus briefly relates the incident upon which this calumny is founded:—"In my parlour at Ryedale," says that gentleman, "Burns and I, one afternoon, were very gracious and confidential. I did advise him to be temperate in all things. I might have spoken daggers, but I did not mean them. He shook with rage to the very inmost fibre of his frame, and drew the sword-cane," when I exclaimed, 'What! wilt thou thus, and in my own house?' The poor

* Burns, like every other excise-officer, wore, professionally, at all times, a sword in a staff; and drew it on this occasion, as a soldier would lay hold of his to repel an indignity.

fellow was so stung with remorse, that he dashed himself down on the floor."

A philosopher would perceive in such a circumstance a high-minded individual, in a moment of irritation, threatening to avenge an unprovoked affront, and at the bare mention of the hospitable hearth becoming disarmed and subdued; but the envious soul would see nothing in it but the terrible picture of a tortured wretch who habitually carried about with him the disposition, and the concealed stiletto of the assassin and the suicide. The good heart of Dr. Johnson could pardon and even extenuate an unintentional murder committed by his friend, while the unnatural mother of the hapless individual could use every effort to accelerate the stroke of the executioner.

Of Jeffrey, who has made an apology for his malignity, it would be useless to speak. Repentance, however, is a poor atonement for a life spent in disseminating calumny and defamation.

It is melancholy to reflect, that though Burns possessed a candour which led him to view all the actions of others on the brightest side, the purest of his own have been either overlooked or distorted. His virtues have been denied; and when that could not be done, they have been depreciated. But prejudices will pass away, and men of feeling and sentiment will do justice to his memory. They will be influenced by no personal, no political enmities. They will admire his generosity, his patience under adversity, and his magnanimity on the most trying occasions. They will reverence his fidelity to the female who trusted her fate to his honour. They will applaud that noble sentiment which he uttered, and which ought to be engraven in letters of gold—*The happiness or misery of a fellow-*

creature was placed in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit? They will contemplate with delight that act of piety by which he gave the half of his fortune to extricate his brother from difficulties, and to support his aged mother. They will regard with astonishment his perfect disinterestedness in the midst of privations of every kind, and regret that ever he devoted a single moment to the service of those miserable beings who forsook him in his last hour. They will perceive in his poetry that "light from heaven" which gives to the thoughts and language of genius the force of inspiration. They will acknowledge in his letters the warmth of that eloquence which is so expressive of the intense fire of his disposition. In short, they will observe that he is distinguished in all his actions and in all his writings, by an abhorrence of oppression, by a liberal and elevated mind, and by a passion for glory, freedom, and sincerity.

When they consider these divine qualities of his heart, they will be surprised and shocked to hear that men could be found so base as to vilify his character, and to represent him as the most wicked and abandoned of his species. But this will only increase their veneration for his memory. They will invest him with the character of a prophet, and show how literally and truly his predictions have been fulfilled. They will recognise in the calumnies of Scott and Jeffrey, "the degrading epithets," which he foresaw "malice or misrepresentation would affix to his name." They will turn aside with loathing from the venom of their disciples; and rejoice, that while their names are rotting in the charnel-house of oblivion, that of Burns will continue to increase in lustre, and to gather fresh laurels in its progress to immortality.

J. B.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF BURNS,
BY HIS BROTHER GILBERT.

At the period of the death of Burns, his brother Gilbert was ignorant of the existence of the Letter to Dr. Moore, inserted in the preceding Essay. Having been applied to by Mrs. Dunlop for some memoirs of his brother, he complied with her request in a letter, from which the following narrative is chiefly extracted. It will serve not merely to illustrate, but to authenticate the sketch of the poet's life written by himself.

It may gratify curiosity to know some particulars of the history of some of the poems of Burns; and with this view the subsequent extract is made from a letter of his brother to Dr. Currie.

These two documents are interesting as memorials of what difficulties genius can encounter and overcome, in emerging from obscurity. Burns did not, like men of genius born under happier auspices, retire, in the moment of inspiration, to the silence and solitude of his study, and commit his verses to paper as they arranged themselves in his mind. Fortune did not afford him this indulgence. It was during the toils of daily labour that his fancy exerted itself. The muses, as he himself informs us, found him at the plough. In this situation, it was necessary to fix his verses on his memory, and it was often many days, nay, weeks, after a poem was finished, before it was written down. During all this time, by frequent repetition, the association between the thought and the expression was confirmed; and the impartiality of taste with which written language is reviewed and retouched after it has faded on the memory, could not in such instances be exerted. The original manuscripts of many of his poems are preserved, and they differ in nothing material from the last edition printed under his own superintendence.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a small house about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, and in the vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway. The name, which the Poet and his brother modernized into Burns, was originally Burnes, or Burness. Their father, William Burnes, was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, and had received the education common in Scotland to persons in his condition of life. His family having fallen into reduced circumstances, he was compelled to leave his home in his nineteenth year, and turned his steps towards the south in quest of a livelihood. The same necessity attended his brother Robert. "I have often heard my father," says Gilbert, in his letter to Mrs. Dunlop, "describe the anguish of mind he felt when they parted on the top of a hill on the confines of their native place, each going off his several way in search of new adventures, and scarcely knowing whether he went. My father undertook to act as a gardener, and shaped his course to Edinburgh, where he wrought very hard when he could get work, passing through a variety of difficulties. Still, however, he endeavoured to spare some-

thing for the support of his aged parents; and I recollect hearing him mention his having sent a bank-note for this purpose, when money of that kind was so scarce in Kincardineshire, that they scarcely knew how to employ it when it arrived."

From Edinburgh, William Burnes passed westward into the county of Ayr, where he engaged himself as a gardener to the laird of Fairly, with whom he lived two years; then changing his service for that of Crawford of Doonside. At length, being desirous of settling in life, he took a perpetual lease of seven acres of land from Dr. Campbell, physician in Ayr, with the view of commencing nurseryman and public gardener; and, having built a house upon it with his own hands, married, in December, 1787, Agnes Brown, a woman of a mild and affectionate disposition.

Before William Burnes had made much progress in preparing his nursery, he was withdrawn from that undertaking by Mr. Ferguson, who purchased the estate of Doonholm, in the immediate neighbourhood, and engaged him as his

gardener and overseer; and this was his situation when Robert, the first fruit of his marriage, was born.

Shortly after the birth of the Poet an accident happened, which gave rise to a rumour, that he was born in the midst of a storm, which blew down a part of the building. "The story you have heard,"* says Gilbert, "of the gable of my father's house falling down, is simply as follows:—When my father built his 'clay biggin,' he put in two stone-jambe, as they are called, and a lintel, carrying up a chimney in his clay gable. The consequence was, that as the gable subsided, the jambe remaining firm, threw it off its centre; and, one very stormy morning, when my brother was nine or ten days old, a little before day-light, a part of the gable fell out, and the rest appeared so shattered, that my mother, with the young poet, had to be carried through the storm to a neighbour's house, where they remained a week till their own dwelling was adjusted."

Though in the service of Mr. Ferguson, William Burnes lived in his own house, his wife managing her family and her little dairy, which consisted sometimes of two, sometimes of three milk cows; and this state of unambitious content continued till the year 1766. His son Robert was sent by him, in his sixth year, to a school at Alloway Mills, about a mile distant, taught by a person of the name of Campbell; but this teacher being in a few months appointed master of the workhouse at Ayr, William Burnes, in conjunction with some other heads of families, engaged John Murdoch in his stead. The education of Robert and of his brother Gilbert, was in common. "With him," says the latter, "we learned to read English tolerably well,

and to write a little. He taught us, too, the English grammar. I was too young to profit much from his lessons in grammar; but Robert made some proficiency in it—a circumstance of considerable weight in the unfolding of his genius and character; as he soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement; for even then he was a reader when he could get a book. Murdoch, whose library at that time had no great variety in it, lent him *The Life of Hannibal*, which was the first book he read (the school-book excepted), and almost the only one he had an opportunity of reading while he was at school; for *The Life of Wallace*, which he classes with it in one of his letters to you, he did not see for some years afterwards, when he borrowed it from the blacksmith who shod our horses."

In the meantime William Burnes, by his intelligence, industry, and integrity, acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of Mr. Ferguson, that, with the view of promoting his interest, he leased him the farm of Mount Oliphant.

"The farm," continues Gilbert, "was upwards of seventy acres (between eighty and ninety English statute measure), the rent of which was to be forty pounds annually for the first six years, and afterwards forty-five pounds. My father endeavoured to sell his leasehold property, for the purpose of stocking this farm, but at that time was unable, and Mr. Ferguson lent him a hundred pounds for that purpose. He removed to his new situation at Whitsunside, 1766.

"It was, I think, not above two years after this, that Murdoch, our tutor and friend, left this part of the country; and there being no school near us, and our little services being useful on the farm,

* This passage is extracted from a letter to Dr. Currie.

my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter-evenings by candle-light; and in this way my two eldest sisters got all the education they received.

"I remember a circumstance that happened at this time, which, though trifling in itself, is fresh in my memory, and may serve to illustrate the early character of my brother. Murdoch came to spend a night with us, and to take his leave, when he was about to go into Carrick. He brought us, as a present and memorial of him, a small compendium of English Grammar, and the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*, and, by way of passing the evening, began to read the play aloud. We were all attention for some time, till presently the whole party was dissolved in tears. A female in the play (I have but a confused remembrance of it) had her hands chopt off, and her tongue cut out, and then was insultingly desired to call for water to wash her hands. At this, in an agony of distress, we with one voice desired that he would read no more. My father observed, that if we would not hear it out, it would be needless to leave the play with us. Robert replied, that if it was left he would burn it. My father was going to chide him for this ungrateful return to his tutor's kindness; but Murdoch interfered, declaring that he liked to see so much sensibility; and he left *The School for Love*, a comedy (translated I think from the French), in its place.

"Nothing could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant. We rarely saw any body except the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed the greatest part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farm in the country, at the same

time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed *Saunders's Geographical Grammar* for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of *Derham's Physics and Astro-Theology*, and *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation*, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history.

"Robert read all these works with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, then lately published by James Meunier in Kilmarnock. From this Robert collected a competent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches. A brother of my mother, who had lived with us some time, and had learned some arithmetic by our winter evening's candle, went into a bookseller's shop in Ayr, to purchase *The Ready Reckoner*, or *Tradesman's sure Guide*, and a book to teach him to write letters. Luckily, in place of *The Complete Letter-Writer*, he got by mistake a small collection of letters by the most eminent writers, with a few sensible directions for attaining an easy epistolary style. This book was to Robert of the greatest consequence. It inspired him with a strong desire to excel in letter-writing, while it furnished him with models by some of the first writers in our language.

"My brother was about thirteen or

fourteen, when my father, regretting that we wrote so ill, sent us, week about, during a summer quarter, to the parish-school of Dalrymple, which, though between two and three miles distant, was the nearest to us, that we might have an opportunity of remedying this defect. About this time a bookish acquaintance of my father's procured us a reading of two volumes of Richardson's *Pamela*, which was the first novel we read, and the only part of Richardson's works my brother was acquainted with till towards the period of his commencing author. Till that time too he remained unacquainted with Fielding, with Smollett, (two volumes of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, and two volumes of *Percegrine Pickle* excepted,) with Hume, with Robertson, and almost all our authors of eminence of the latter times. I recollect indeed my father borrowed a volume of English history from Mr. Hamilton of Bourtreschill's gardener. It treated of the reign of James the First, and his unfortunate son, Charles, but I do not know who was the author; all that I remember of it is something of Charles's conversation with his children.

About this time Murdoch, our former teacher, after having been in different places in the country, and having taught a school some time in Dumfries, came to be the established teacher of the English language in Ayr, a circumstance of considerable consequence to us. The remembrance of my father's former friendship, and his attachment to my brother, made him do every thing in his power for our improvement. He sent us Pope's works, and some other poetry, the first that we had an opportunity of reading, excepting what is contained in *The English Collection*, and in the volume of *The Edinburgh Magazine* for 1772; excepting also those excellent new Songs that are hawked about the country in baskets, or exposed on stalls in the streets.

"The summer after we had been at Dalrymple school, my father sent Robert to Ayr, to revise his English grammar with his former teacher. He had been there only one week, when he was obliged to return, to assist at the harvest. When the harvest was over, he went back to school, where he remained two weeks, and this completes the account of his school education, excepting one summer quarter, some time afterwards, that he attended the parish-school of Kirk-Oswald (where he lived with a brother of our mother's), to learn surveying.

"During the two last weeks that he was with Murdoch, he himself was engaged in learning French, and he communicated the instructions he received to my brother, who, when he returned, brought home with him a French dictionary and grammar, and *The Adventures of Telemachus* in the original. In a little while, by the assistance of these books, he had acquired such a knowledge of the language, as to read and understand any French author in prose. This was considered as a sort of prodigy, and through the medium of Murdoch, procured him the acquaintance of several lads in Ayr, who were at that time gabbling French, and the notice of some families, particularly that of Dr. Malcolm, where a knowledge of French was a recommendation.

"Observing the facility with which he had acquired the French language, Mr. Robinson, the established writing-master in Ayr, and Mr. Murdoch's particular friend, having himself acquired a considerable knowledge of the Latin language by his own industry, without ever having learnt it at school, advised Robert to make the same attempt, promising him every assistance in his power. Agreeably to this advice, he purchased *The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue*, but finding this study dry and uninteresting,

it was quickly laid aside. He frequently returned to his Rudiments on any little chagrin or disappointment, particularly in his love affairs; but the Latin seldom predominated more than a day or two at a time, or a week at most. Observing himself the ridicule that would attach to this sort of conduct if it were known, he made two or three humorous stanzas on the subject, which I cannot now recollect, but they all ended,

'So I'll to my Latin again.'

"Thus you see Mr. Murdoch was a principal means of my brother's improvement. Worthy man! though foreign to my present purpose, I cannot take leave of him without tracing his future history. He continued for some years a respected and useful teacher in Ayr, till one evening that he had been overtaken in liquor, he happened to speak somewhat disrespectfully of Dr. Dalrymple, the parish minister, who had not paid him that attention to which he thought himself entitled. In Ayr he might as well have spoken blasphemy. He found it proper to give up his appointment. He went to London, where he still lives, a private teacher of French. He has been a considerable time married, and keeps a shop of stationery wares.

"The father of Dr. Paterson, now physician at Ayr, was, I believe, a native of Aberdeenshire, and was one of the established teachers of Ayr when my father settled in the neighbourhood. He early recognised my father as a fellow native of the north of Scotland, and a certain degree of intimacy subsisted between them during Mr. Paterson's life. After his death, his widow, who is a very genteel woman, and of great worth, delighted in doing what she thought her husband would have wished to have done, and assiduously kept up her attentions to all his acquaintance. She kept alive the

intimacy with our family, by frequently inviting my father and mother to her house on Sundays, when she met them at church. When she came to know my brother's passion for books, she kindly offered us the use of her husband's library, and from her we got *The Spectator*, *Pope's Translation of Homer*, and several other books that were of use to us.

"Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr, is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give, than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise of the value of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let a few years ago five pounds *per annum* lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon fell into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accident and disease.

"To the buffetings of misfortune, we could only oppose hard labour, and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm; for we had no hired servant, male or female.

"The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old (for he was now above fifty), broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine,

sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his 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 constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull head-ache, 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.

"By a stipulation in my father's lease, he had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every sixth year. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years; but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. He then took the farm of Lochlea, of one hundred and thirty acres, at the rent of twenty shillings an acre, in the parish of Tarbolton, of Mr. —, then a merchant in Ayr, and now (1797) a merchant in Liverpool. He removed to this farm at Whitunday, 1777, and possessed it only seven years. No writing had ever been made out of the conditions of the lease; a misunderstanding took place respecting them; the subjects in dispute were submitted to arbitration; and the decision involved my father's affairs in ruin. He lived to know of this decision, but not to see any execution in consequence of it. He died on the 13th of February 1784.

"The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age), were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he

was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women; yet, when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he *fainted, sick, and died away*; but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded any thing of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one, out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivor, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes which he gave her. One generally reigned paramount in his affection; but as Yorick's affections flowed out toward Madame de L—— at the *ramble door*, while the eternal vows of Eliza were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many underplots in the drama of his love.

"As these connexions were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty (from which he never deviated till he reached his twenty-third year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be soon the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he had no probability of being master of for a great while. He began, therefore, to think of trying some other line of life. He and I had for several years taken land of my father for the purpose of raising flax on our own ac-

count. In the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax raising. He accordingly wrought at the business of a flax-dresser in Irvine for six months, but abandoned it at that period, as neither agreeing with his health nor inclination.

"In Irvine he had contracted some acquiescence of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overlooking the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him. Towards the end of the period under review (in his twenty-fourth year), and soon after his father's death, he was furnished with the subject of his epistle to John Rankine. During this period also he became a freemason, which was his first introduction to the life of a boon companion. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, and the praise he has bestowed on Scotch drink (which seems to have misled his historians), I do not recollect, during these seven years, nor till towards the end of his commencing author (when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company), to have ever seen him intoxicated; nor was he at all given to drinking. A stronger proof of the general sobriety of his conduct need not be required than what I am about to give. During the whole of the time we lived in the farm of Lochlea with my father, he allowed my brother and me such wages for our labour as he gave to other labourers, as a part of which, every article of our clothing manufactured in the family was regularly accounted for. When my father's affairs drew near a crisis, Robert and I took the farm of Mossiel, consisting of one hundred and eighteen acres, at the rent of ninety pounds *per annum* (the farm on which I live at present), from Gavin Hamilton, as an asylum for the family in case of

the worst. It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was seven pounds *per annum* each; and during the whole time this family concern lasted, which was for four years, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, his expences never in any one year exceeded his slender income. As I was entrusted with the keeping of the family accounts, it is not possible that there can be any fallacy in this statement in my brother's favour. His temperance and frugality were every thing that could be wished.

"The farm of Mossiel lies very high, and mostly on a cold wet bottom. The first four years that we were on the farm were very frosty, and the spring was very late. Our crops in consequence were very unprofitable; and, notwithstanding our utmost diligence and economy, we found ourselves obliged to give up our bargain, with the loss of a considerable part of our original stock. It was during these four years that Robert formed his connexion with Jean Armour, afterwards Mrs. Burns. This connexion could no longer be concealed, about the time we came to a final determination to quit the farm. Robert durst not engage with his family in his poor unsettled state, but was anxious to shield his partner, by every means in his power, from the consequences of their imprudence. It was agreed therefore between them, that they should make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage; that he should go to Jamaica to *push his fortune*, and that she should remain with her father till it might please Providence to put the means of supporting a family in his power.

"Mrs. Burns was a great favourite of

her father's. The intimation of a marriage was the first suggestion he received of her real situation. He was in the greatest distress, and fainted away. The marriage did not appear to him to make the matter better. A husband in Jamaica appeared to him and his wife little better than none, and an effectual bar to any other prospects of a settlement in life that their daughter might have. They therefore expressed a wish to her, that the written papers which respected the marriage should be cancelled, and thus the marriage rendered void. In her melancholy state she felt the deepest remorse at having brought such heavy affliction on parents that loved her so tenderly, and submitted to their exhortations. Their wish was mentioned to Robert. He felt the deepest anguish of mind. He offered to stay at home, and provide for his wife and family in the best manner that his daily labours could provide for them; that being the only means in his power. Even this offer they did not approve of; for humble as Miss Armour's station was, and great though her imprudence had been, she still, in the eyes of her partial parents, might look to a better connexion than that of my friendless and unhappy brother, at that time without house or bidding-Place. Robert at length consented to their wishes; but his feelings on this occasion were of the most distracting nature: and the impression of sorrow was not effaced, till, by a regular marriage, they were indissolubly united.

⁴⁴ In the state of mind which this separation produced, he wished to leave the country as soon as possible, and agreed with Dr. Douglas to go out to Jamaica as an assistant overseer; or, as I believe it is called, a book-keeper, on his estate. As he had not sufficient money to pay his passage, and the vessel in which Dr. Douglas was to procure a passage for him was not expected to sail for

some time, Mr. Hamilton advised him to publish his Poems in the mean time by subscription, as a likely way of getting a little money, to provide him more liberally in necessaries for Jamaica. Agreeably to this advice, subscription bills were printed immediately, and the printing was commenced at Kilmarnock, his preparations going on at the same time for his voyage. The reception, however, which his Poems met with in the world, and the friends they procured him, made him change his resolution of going to Jamaica, and he was advised to go to Edinburgh to publish a second edition. On his return, in happier circumstances, he renewed his connexion with Mrs. Burns, and rendered it permanent by an union for life.

⁴⁵ Thus, Madam, have I endeavoured to give you a simple narrative of the leading circumstances in my brother's early life. The remaining part he spent in Edinburgh, or in Dumfriesshire, and its incidents are as well known to you as to me. His genius having procured him your patronage and friendship, this gave rise to the correspondence between you, in which, I believe, his sentiments were delivered with the most respectful, but most unreserved confidence, and which only terminated with the last days of his life."

HISTORY OF THE EARLY POEMS OF BURNS,

Extracted from a Letter of his brother Gilbert to Dr. Currie.

Dear Sir, Monroel, April 2, 1796.

Your letter of the 14th of March I received in due course, but from the hurry of the season have been hitherto hindered from answering it. I will now try to give you what satisfaction I can, in regard

to the particulars you mention. I cannot pretend to be very accurate in respect to the dates of the Poems, but none of them except *Winter*, a *Dirge* (which was a juvenile production), *The Death and dying Words of poor Maille*, and some of the songs, were composed before the year 1794. The circumstances of the poor sheep were pretty much as he has described them. He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out, with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day; when Hugh Wilson, a curious looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with *Hugbo's* appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Maille was set to rights; and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her *Death and dying Words*, pretty much in the way they now stand.

Among the earliest of his Poems was the *Epistle to David*. Robert often composed without any regular plan. When any thing made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in the summer, 1794, when in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden (kail-yard), that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was

of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles; and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here there was a train of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism, and we talked of sending it to some magazine; but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped.

It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that the author first repeated to me the *Address to the Deil*. The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of that august personage.

Death and Doctor Heronbeck, though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1793. The Schoolmaster of Tarselton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that "Advice would be given in common disorders at

the shop gratis." Robert was at a mason meeting in Tarbolton, when the *demiols* unfortunately made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparition which he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind: this set him to work for the rest of the way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me.

The Epistle to John Lapraik was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem,

"On Fauch-c'en we had a rockin."

I believe he has omitted the word *rocking* in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock, or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting at a neighbour's house: hence the phrase of *going a rocking*, or *with the rock*. As the connexion which the implement had with the phrase was forgotten, when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these *rockings*: at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their rocks, that Lapraik's song, beginning,

"When I upon thy bosom lean,"

was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik; and his second, in reply to his answer.

The verses to the *Moor* and *Mountain* *Daily* were composed on the occasions

mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough: I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic composition, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise.

Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life, than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, *Man was made to mourn*, was composed.

Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, "Let us worship God," used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for *The Coffer's Saturday Night*. The hint of the plan, and title of the poem, were taken from Ferguson's *Farmer's Ingle*. When Robert had not some pleasure in view, in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons (those precious breathing times for the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks, that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat *The Coffer's Saturday Night*. I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul. I mention this to you, that you may see what hit the taste of unlettered criticism. I should be glad to know if

the enlightened mind and refined taste of Mr. Rescoe, who has borne such honourable testimony to this poem, agrees with me in the selection.

Fergusson, in his *Hallow Fair* of Edinburgh, I believe, likewise furnished a hint of the title and plan of the *Holy Fair*. The farical scene the Poet there describes was often a favourite field of his observation, and the most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes.

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the *Lament* was composed on that unfortunate passage in his matrimonial history, which I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs. Dunlop, after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided.

The Tale of Two Dogs, was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog, which he called *Luath*, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me, that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend *Luath*, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book, under the title of *Stanzas to the Memory of a quadruped Friend*; but this plan was given up for the *Tale* as it now stands. *Cesar* was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding that with his favourite *Luath*.

The first time Robert heard the spinnet played upon, was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minister of the parish of London, now in Glasgow, having given up the parish in favour of his son. Dr. Lawrie has several daughters; one of them played; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters,

the brother, the poet, and the other guests, mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our Poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept. It was to Dr. Lawrie that Dr. Blacklock's letter was addressed, which my brother, in his letter to Dr. Moore, mentions as the reason of his going to Edinburgh.

When my father feared his little property near Alloway Kirk, the wall of the church-yard had gone to ruin, and cattle had free liberty of pasturing in it. My father, with two or three other neighbours, joined in an application to the town council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for enclosing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it as his burial-place, and we learned that reverence for it people generally have for the burial-place of their ancestors. My brother was living in Ellisland, when Captain Grose, on his peregrinations through Scotland, staid some time at Carse-house, in the neighbourhood, with Captain Robert Riddell, of Clearriddell, a particular friend of my brother's. The Antiquarian and the Poet were "unco pack and thick together." Robert requested of Captain Grose, when he should come to Ayrshire, that he would make a drawing of Alloway Kirk, as it was the burial place of his father, and where he himself had a sort of claim to lay down his bones when they should be no longer serviceable to him; and added, by way of encouragement, that it was the scene of many a good story of witches and apparitions, of which he knew the Captain was very fond. The Captain agreed to the request, provided the Poet would furnish a witch-story, to be printed along with it. *Tam o' Shanter* was produced on this occasion, and was

first published in *Grass's Antiquities of Scotland*.

The poem is founded on a traditional story. The leading circumstances, of a man riding home very late from Ayr, in a stormy night, his seeing a light in Alloway Kirk, his having the curiosity to look in, his seeing a dance of witches, with the devil playing on the bag-pipe to them, the scanty covering of one of the witches, which made him so far forget himself, as to cry, *Wae! haeven, short lark!*—with the melancholy catastrophe of the piece, is all a true story, that can be well attested by many respectable old people in that neighbourhood.

I do not at present recollect any circumstances respecting the other poems that would be at all interesting. Even some of those I have mentioned, I am afraid, may appear trifling enough, but you will only make use of what appears to you of consequence.

The following Poems in the first Edinburgh Edition, were not in that published in Kilmarnock: *Death and Deceit Horn-book*—*The Brig of Ayr*—*The Calf*—(the Poet had been with Mr. Gavin Hamilton in the morning, who said jocularly to him, when he was going to church, in allusion to the injunction of some parents to their children, that he must be sure to bring him a note of the sermon at mid-day; this address to the reverend gentleman on his text was accordingly produced.)—*The Ordination*—*The Address to the wince Guide*—*Tam Samson's Elegy*—*A Winter Night*—*Stanzas on the same Occasion as the preceding Prayer*—*Verses left at a reverend Friend's House*—*The First Psalm*—*Prayer under the Pressure of violent Anguish*—*The First Six Verses of the Ninetieth Psalm*—*Verses to Miss Logan, with Beattie's Poems*—*To a Haggis*—*Address to Edinburgh*—*John Barlycorn*—*When Guil-*

ford gude—*Behind yon Hills where Stinchard flows*—*Green grow the Rabbits*—*Again rejoicing Nature sets*—*The gloomy Night*—*No Churchman am I*.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

GILBERT BURNS.

To this History of the early Poems of Burns, the Writer, in a subsequent letter to Dr. Currie, added the following particulars concerning the friends which his brother's talents procured him before he left Ayrshire, or attracted the notice of the world.

"The farm of Mossiel, at the time of our coming to it (Martimas 1783), was the property of the Earl of Loudon, but was held in tack by Mr. Gavin Hamilton, writer in Mauchline, from whom we had our bargain; who had thus an opportunity of knowing, and showing a sincere regard for my brother, before he knew that he was a Poet. The Poet's estimation of him, and the strong outlines of his character, may be collected from the *Dedication* to this gentleman. When the publication was begun, Mr. Hamilton entered very warmly into its interests, and promoted the subscription very extensively.

"Mr. Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, is a man of worth and taste, of warm affections, and connected with a most respectable circle of friends and relations. It is to this gentleman *The Carter's Saturday Night* is inscribed. The Poems of my brother, which I have formerly mentioned, no sooner came into his hands, than they were quickly known, and well received, in the extensive circle of Mr. Aiken's friends, which gave them a sort of currency, necessary in this wick world, even for the good reception of

things valuable in themselves. But Mr. Aiken not only admired the Poet; as soon as he became acquainted with him, he showed the warmest regard for the man, and did every thing in his power to forward his interest and respectability.

"The *Epistle to a Young Friend* was addressed to this gentleman's son, Mr. A. H. Aiken, now of Liverpool. He was the eldest of a young family, who were taught to receive my brother with respect, as a man of genius, and their father's friend.

"The *Briqs of Ayr* is inscribed to John Ballantyne, Esq. banker in Ayr; one of those gentlemen to whom my brother was introduced by Mr. Aiken. He interested himself very warmly in my brother's concerns, and constantly showed the greatest friendship and attachment to him. When the Kilmarnock edition was all sold off, and a considerable demand pointed out the propriety of publishing a second edition, Mr. Wilson, who had printed the first, was asked if he would print the second, and take his chance of being paid out of the first sale. This he declined; and when this came to Mr. Ballantyne's knowledge, he generously offered to accommodate Robert with what money he might need for that purpose; but advised him to go to Edinburgh, as the fittest place for publishing. When he did go to Edinburgh, his friends advised him to publish again by subscription, so that he did not need to accept this offer.

"Mr. William Parker, merchant in Kilmarnock, was a subscriber for thirty-five copies of the Kilmarnock edition. This may perhaps appear not deserving of notice here; but if the comparative obscurity of the Poet at this period, be taken into consideration, it appears to me a greater effort of generosity, than

many things which appear more brilliant in my brother's future history.

"Mr. Robert Muir, merchant in Kilmarnock, was one of those friends Robert's poetry had procured him, and one who was dear to his heart. This gentleman had no very great fortune, or long list of dignified ancestry; but what Robert says of Captain Matthew Henderson, might be said of him with great propriety, *that he held the patent of his honours immediately from Almighty God*. Nature had indeed marked him a gentleman in the most legible characters. He died while yet a young man, soon after the publication of my brother's first Edinburgh edition.

"Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, paid a very flattering attention, and showed a good deal of friendship for the Poet.

"Before his going to Edinburgh, as well as after, Robert seemed peculiarly pleased with Professor Stewart's friendship and conversation.

"But of all the friendships which Robert acquired in Ayrshire and elsewhere, none seemed more agreeable to him than that of Mrs. Dunlop* of Dunlop; nor any which has been more uniformly and constantly exerted in behalf of him and his family, of which, were it proper, I could give many instances. Robert was on the point of setting out for Edinburgh before Mrs. Dunlop had heard of him. About the time of my brother's publishing in Kilmarnock, she had been afflicted with a long and severe illness, which had reduced her mind to the most distressing state of depression. In this situation, a copy of the printed

* This lady was the daughter and sole heiress of Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, and lineal descendant of the illustrious Wallace, the first of Scottish warriors.

Poems was laid on her table by a friend; and happening to open on *The Caterer's Saturday Night*, she read it over with the greatest pleasure and surprise; the Poet's description of the simple cottagers, operating on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, expelling the demon *æneid*, and restoring her to her wonted inward harmony and satisfaction. Mrs. Dunlop sent off a person express to Mosgiel, distant fifteen or sixteen miles, with a very obliging letter to my brother, desiring him to send her half a dozen copies of his Poems, if he had them to spare, and begging he would do her the pleasure of calling at Dunlop House as soon as convenient. This was the beginning of a correspondence which ended only with the Poet's life. The last use he made of his pen was writing a short letter to this lady a few days before his death.

"Colonel Fullarton, who afterwards paid a very particular attention to the Poet, was not in the country at the time of his first commencing author.

"At this distance of time, and in the hurry of a wet day, snatched from laborious occupations, I may have forgot some persons who ought to have been mentioned on this occasion: for which, if it come to my knowledge, I shall be heartily sorry."

NOTE.

In 1810, this worthy man was engaged to superintend a reprint of Dr. Currie's Edition of the Works of Burns. He executed the task with great ability, supplying several deficiencies, and correcting many mis-statements and exaggerations in the Life of his Brother by that writer. The spirit which he displays is that of generosity and impartiality, mingled with a certain bitterness of reflection. "Dr. Currie," says he, "knowing the events of the latter years of my brother's life, only from the reports which had been propagated, and thinking it necessary, lest the candour of his work should be called in question, to state the substance of these reports, has given a very exaggerated view of the failings of my brother's life at that period—which is certainly to be regretted." The truth is, this obnoxious Life ought to have been entirely obliterated, and one substituted in its place by this highly-gifted individual, which would have been free from malice and pedantry, and which would have connected the fame of the Biographer with that of the Poet. But this was neither contemplated nor performed. On the publication of the new Edition, the Editor repaid, with interest, the sum which his brother advanced to him in 1788.* He died on the 27th of April, 1837.

* See p. 30.

POEMS OF BURNS,

IN EIGHT BOOKS.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

Printed by J. Sturges, in Pall-mall

1724

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, at least in their original language, "a fountain shut up and a book sealed." Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing Poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners, he felt and saw in himself, and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymers from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, awakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing: and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toils and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncount to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel

Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence, forsooth !

It is an observation of that celebrated Poet, Shenstone, whose divine Elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that, "HUMILITY has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word genius, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manoeuvre below the worst character, which he hopes his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces ; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers the Author returns his most sincere thanks ; not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life ; but if after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dullness and nonsense, let him be done by, as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION

OF

THE SECOND EDITION,

TO

THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
CALEDONIAN HUNT.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

A SCOTTISH BARD, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land—those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their ancestors? 'The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic Bard Elijah did Elisha, at the Plough; and threw her inspiring MANTLE over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours. That path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours. I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country, that the blood of her ancient Heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public

spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your Forefathers, may pleasure ever be of your party; and may social joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostling of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured Worth attend your return to your native seats! and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May Corruption shrink at your kindling, indignant glance; and may Tyranny in the Ruler, and Licentiousness in the People, equally find in you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,

With the sincerest gratitude, and highest respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most devoted, humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, April 4, 1787.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK I.

TALES AND FICTIONS.

THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE. —

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coll,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing through the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him *CARL*,
Was kept for his Honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his legs,
Show'd he was name o' Scotland's dogs,
But whelpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.
His locked, letter'd, brow brass collar,
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fiercest a pride nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
E'en wi' a tinkler gypsy's messin'.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae sweeted tyke, though e'er we doddie,
But he wad stand, as glad to see him;
And stroun't on suncs and hillocks wi' him.

The ither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luarn ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's *Fingal*.

He was a gash and faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a thought or dyke.
His honest, sonie, baw'ny face,
Aye ga' him friends in like place.
His breast was white, his towie back
Weel-clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaele tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' once pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snawkit;
Whyles mice and mousieworts they howkit;
Whyles scout'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression,
About the *Loans o' the Caratoun*.

CARL.

I've often wonder'd, honest Lush,
What sort of life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd awa.

Our laird gets in his racked remu,
His coach, his kaim, and a' his sumu;
He rises when he likes himself;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang's my tail, where, through the streets,
The yellow letter'd Geordie looks.

Free morn to e'en it's naught but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;

An' though the gentry first are steekin,
 Yet ev'n the la' folk fill their pechans
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, and siclike trasherie,
 That's little short o' downright wastrie.
 Our whippet-in, wee blainie wonner,
 Poor worthless elf, is e'en a dinner
 Better than any tenant man
 His Honour has in a' the lan';
 An' what poor cot-folk put their paunch in,
 I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Caesar, whyles they're fash enough;
 A couter howkin in a shough,
 Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
 Baring a quarry and siclike,
 Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
 A mytrie o' wee daddie weans,
 An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
 Them right and tight in shack and cage.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger,
 But how it comes, I never ken'd yet,
 They're mainly wonderfu' contented:
 And heirdly chiefs, and clever hizzies,
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then, to see how ye're neglectin;
 How buff'd, and cuff'd, and diarspeckl'd!
 L., d, man! our gentry care as little
 For delvers, ditchers, and sic canle;
 They gang as easy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a sinking brock.

I've notic'd on oor laird's court-day,
 And mony a time my heart's been wae,
 Poor tenant bodies, steam o' cash,
 How they maun chole a factor's snash:
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
 He'll apprehend them, point their gear;
 While they maun stand wi' aspect humble,
 And hear it a', and fear and tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
 But surely poor folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think,
 Though constantly on poorith's brink;
 They're sae accusom'd wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
 They're aye in less or mair provided;

And though faulps'd wi' close employment,
 A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
 Their grubbie weans, and faithfu' wives;
 The grunting things are just their pride,
 That sweetens a' their fire-side.

And whyles twal-penny worth o' nappy
 Can mak the bodies unco happy;
 They lay aside their private cares,
 To mind the Kirk and Sine affairs:
 They'll talk o' patronage and priens,
 Wi' kindling fury in their breins;
 Or tell what new taxation's comin',
 And ferlie at the folk o' Lon'on.

As bleakfac'd Hallowmas returns,
 They get the jovial, ramous kirms,
 When rural life, o' every nation,
 Unies in common recreation:
 Love blinks, Wit shaps, an' social Mirth
 Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
 They bar the door on frosty winds;
 The nappy reeks wi' mauling reams,
 An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
 The lunsie piss, and sneechin mill,
 Are handed round wi' right gude will;
 The candle sold folks crackling crouse;
 The young ones rammin' through the house—
 My heart has been sae fain to see them,
 That I for joy hae barkin' wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
 Sic game is now owre when play'd.
 There's monie a creditable stock
 O' decent, honest, fawson folk,
 Are given our bluish roes and branch,
 Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
 Wha thinks to kash himself the faster
 In favour wi' some genle Master,
 Wha sibline, thrang a-parliamentin,
 For Britain's gude his soul intendin—

CÆSAR.

Heith, lad, ye little ken about it:
 Fou Barrats's gude gude faith I doubt it!
 Say rather, gude as PARLIAMENTS lead him,
 And sayin' Ay or No't they bid him:
 At opens an' plays parading,
 Mocking, gambling, masquerading;
 Or may be, in a frolic daff,
 To Hague or Calais take a waff,
 To mak a tour, an' tak a whirl,
 To learn bon ton, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
 He rivers his fisher's auld encells;
 Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
 To thrum guiana, and froth wi' nowt:

Or down Italian *vinea* warbles,
Wh-re-hounding among groves o' myrtles;
Then houses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and faster,
And clear the consequential arrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's Consul for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feed, an' faction.

LUATH.

Heth man! dear dirl! is that the gae
They wauk an' monie a browe an' aye?
Are we sae foughten an' harm'd
For gear to gang that gae at lae?

O wad they say aback frae courts,
And please themsel wi' courtes sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cower!
For that frank, rancin', ramblin' billies,
Fient hart o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their summer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their simmer,
Or choosin' o' a hare or moose-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Camer,
Sae great folk's life's a life o' pleasure!
Nae could or hunger e'er can mair them,
The very thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L...d, man! were ye but whyles whare
I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they needna starve or sweat,
Through winter's cold, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair work to cruse their hamet,
And fill auld age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ill's perplex them,
They mak enow themselves to vex them;
An' aye the less they hae to start them,
In like proportion less will hurt them:
A country fellow at the plough,
His acre's till'd, he's right enough;
A country lassie at her wheel,
Her doreen's done, she's unco weel;
But Gentleman, an' Ladies want,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' work are curst.
They loiter, loonging, lang, an' lazy;
Though deil hant ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dail, and tedious;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless;
And ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloging through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men can out in party-matches,
Then souter a' in deep debauches:

As night they're mad wi' drink an' whoring,
Nicht day their life is past endaring.
The Ladies arm-and-arm in clouters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' iher,
They're a' ran deils an' jads together.
Whyles owre the wee bit cupan' platie,
They slip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbin' braks,
Fore owre the Deevil's pictur'd braks;
Sake on a chance a farmer's wack-yard,
And chestlike onie unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man an' woman,
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloamin' brought the night:
The bonn-clock ham'd wi' lazy drone,
The kye stood routin' i' the loon;
When up they gat, and shook their legs,
Rejoic'd they were na Maw but Dees;
And each took off his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some iher day.

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

Of Brownie, and of Bogie's full is this Buke.
GAVIN DOUGLAS.

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
And gruing fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and miles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sallow dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Numbing her wrath to keep us warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter—
[Auld Ayr wham ne'er a moun surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses].

O Tam, hadst thou but been sae wise,
As wren thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellam,
A blithering, blustering, drunken wellam;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, with the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;

That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on;
The snail and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the L. . . d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep-drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted Kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gart me greet,
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despiest!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got plantit unco right,
Fast by an ingle, blazing finely,
Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely;
And at his elbow souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lov'd him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thagither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secrets, sweet, and precious:
The souter tould his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The norm without might rair and rumble,
Tam did na mind the norm a' while.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself among the nappy;
As bees flee hame wi' lads o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis rare,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
The hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And ae a night he takes the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blown its last;
The rattling show'r's roar on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,

Tam skelpit on through dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whyles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whyles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whyles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and howlers nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd herself.—
Before him Doon pour'd all his floods;
The doubling worns roars through the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze;
Through ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us wren!
Wi' tippenny we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae we'll face the Deil!—
The swats we ream'd in Tammy's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na Deil a boddle.
But Maggie stood right wir astonish'd,
Till by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!—
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cauldron brewt new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and merril in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towrie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes, and part them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins unco toun'd like open presses,
That show'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip sight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able,
To noot upon the haly table,
A murderer's bones in gibbet airn;
Two span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cout'd frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blade red-cross'd;
Five scimitars, wi' murder cross'd;
A garter, which a babe had wrangl'd;
A knife, a father's throat had mangl'd,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stuck to the heft;

Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seem'd like a beggar's cloak,
And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every nook :
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glow'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
The piper loud and louder blew ;
The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
They reel'd, they sea, they cross'd, they
cleekit,
Till like carlin ows and reekit,
And coast her daddies to the work,
And linket as it in her sark !

Now Tam, O Tam ! had they been gossams
A' plump and wrapping, in their arms ;
Their sarks, instead o' creelie flannels,
Been snow-white sevenmen bunder linn ;
Their breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae giv'n them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie bairnies !

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Ripwoodie bags wad spean a foal,
Lowing and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy somach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and wale,
That night inlaid in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore)
For mony a bread to dea'd the sho',
And perish'd mony a bonny bore,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear,
Her cooty-sark o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassic she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her bon, and she was vauntie.—
Ah ! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance o' witches !

But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r ;
Her flights are far beyond her pow'r ;
To sing how Nannie lay and flang,
(A couple yed she was and wrong)
And how Tam stood like a bewitch'd,
And thought his very sen enrich'd ;
Even Satan glow'd, and fdg'd fu' faim,
And how'd and blew wi' might and main :
Till aye he caper, syne anither,
Tam tae his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, " Weel done, Cooty-sark !"
And in an instant all was dark ;
And starcely had he Maggie call'd,
When out the hellish legion sall'd.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke ;
As open panie's mortal fure,
When, pop ! she starts before their nose ;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When, " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud,
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' many an eldritch screech and hollow.

Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! thou'lt get thy furin !
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin !
In vain thy Kate weaves thy comin !
Kate soon will be a woofu' woman !
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane * of the brig :
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fiend a tail she had to shake !
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious egle ;
But little wis she Maggie's meikle—
As spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail :
The carlin clauht her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed :
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cooty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

DEATH

AND

DR. HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

SOME books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd ;
Ev'n Mischers, they hae been kenn'd,

In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And sail'd wi' Scripture.

* It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the next running stream. It may be proper, likewise, to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.

But this that I am goun to tell,
Which largely on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in Hell
Or Dublin city :
That e'er he scarer comes carrel
's a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty ;
I sugger'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches ;
And hillocks, stanes, and bushes, ken ay
Frac ghains and witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Camnock hills out-ow'r :
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set myself ;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd na tell !

I wot come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker ;
Though leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did forgether,
That put me in an eerie swither ;
An awfu' scythe, out-ow'r as thosher,
Clear-dangling, hang ;
A three-tad leister on the isher
Lay, large, an' lang.

In nature seem'd lang Scots ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For feint a wame it had ava !
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp, an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks !

" Gude-even," quo' I, " Friend ! hae ye been
mawin,
Whenither folk are busy awin ?"
It seem'd to mak a kind o' man',
But naething spak ;
At length, says I, " Friend, where ye goun,
Will ye go back ?"

It spak right howe—" My name is Dearn,
But be na fey'd,"—Quoth I, " Gude faich !
Ye're may be come to stop my breath ;
But tent me, billie !
I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith,
See, here's a gully !"

" Gudeman," quo' he, " put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its metal ;

* This encounter happened in seed-time,
1785.

But if I did, I wad be kirkle
To be misdear'd,
I wad na mind it, no that spinle
Out-ow'r my beard."

" Weel, weel," says I, " a bargain be't ;
Come, gies your hand, an' see we're
'greet ;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come, gies your news ;
This while ye hae been mony a gae,*
At monie a house."

" Ay, Ay !" quo' he, and shook his head,
" It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
And choke the breath ;
Folk maun do something for their bread,
And see maun Death,

" Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butcher's bred,
And mony a scheme in vain's been laid
To stop or scare me ;
Till aye Hornbook's † ta'en up the trade,
And faich, he'll wear me.

" Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan !
He's grown ane weel acquaint wi' Buchan, ‡
And ither chaps,
The weans hand out their fingers laughin,
And peak my hips.

" See, here's a scythe, and there's a darr,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart ;
But Dr. Hornbook, wi' his art,
And carsel skill,
He's made them baith no worth a f . . t,
Dams'd hae they'll kill.

" 'Twas last yestreen, nae farther gane,
I threw a noble throw at aye ;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundred's slain ;
But Deil-na-care,
It just play'd diel on the haue,
But did nae mair.

" Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had an fortify'd the part,

* An epidemical fever was then raging in
that part of the country.

† This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is, pro-
fessionally, a brother of the Sovereign Order
of the Ferula ; but by intuition and inspira-
tion, is at once an apothecary, surgeon, and
physician.

‡ Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

That when I looked to my dart,
It was as blum,
Fient heart o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a nail-run.

" I drew my scythe in air a hurry,
I near hand cooipit wi' my fury,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock ;
I might as weel hae try'd a gaitry
O' hard whin rock.

" Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had ken'd it,
Just a . . . in a nail-blade, and send it,
As soon's he smelt it,
Bath their disease, and what will mure it,
At once he tellt it.

" And then a' doctors' saws and whinles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, and secuties,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, and bottles,
He's sure to hae ;
Their Latin names as fast he rantes
As A B C.

" Calces o' fossils, carb, and trees ;
Tree Sal-marinum o' the seas ;
The Farina of beans and pease,
He hae't in plenty ;
Wi' Aqua-fortis, what you please,
He can content ye.

" Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Drums Spiritus of capons ;
Or Mine-horn shavings, Slings, scrapins,
Disull'd pet ee ;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail-clippins,
And mony mae."

" Wae me for Johnny God's * hole now !"
Quo' I, " if that the news be true,
His brow calf-ward where gowans grew,
Sae white and bonny,
Nae doubt they'll rise it wi' the plough,
They'll ruin Johnny !"

The creature grin'd an eldritch laugh,
And sayt, " Ye need na yoke the plough,
Kirk-yards will soon be fill'd enough,
Tak ye nae fear :
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a through,
In twa-three year.

" Where I kill'd aye a fair sreen-death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Hae clad a score i' their last claid,
By drap and pill.

* The grave-digger.

" An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieces were scarce weel
bred,
Can dipence worth to mend her head,
When it was sair ;
The wife slate cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

" A countra laird had taen the bait,
Or some courtesing in his gait,
His only son for Hornbook sae,
And pays him well,
The lad for twa good glesmet pet,
Was laird himself.

" A bonie lass, ye ken'd her name,
Some ill-brewen drink had bow'd her wame ;
She trusts herself, to hid the shame,
In Hornbook's care ;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

" That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way,
Thus gae he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
And's weel paid for't ;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his d . . . d dirt !

" Bus, hark ! I'll tell you o' a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't,
I'll sail the self-conceit Scot,
As dead's a herring* ;
Nixt time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin' !"

But just as he began to tell,
The cold kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the wall,
Which raid us baith :
I took the way that pleas'd myself,
And sae did Death.

THE

DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFUL TALE.

AS MAILIE and her lambs together
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coot a hitch,
And ow'd the warld'd in the ditch :
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughie * he came daytin by.

* A neighbor hard callan.

Wi' glowerin' een, and lifted hands,
 Poor Hughie like a statue stands;
 He saw her days were near-hand ended,
 But, wae's my heart! he could na mend it!
 He gaped wide, but nathing spak!
 At length poor Mailie silence brak!—

"O thou, what lamentable face
 Appears to mourn my wofe's case!
 My dying words attentive hear,
 And bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
 As muckle gear as hoy a sheep,
 O, bid him never tie them mair
 Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
 But ca' them out to park or hill,
 And let them wander at their will;
 So may his flocks increase and grow
 To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woe!"

"Tell him, he was a Master kin',
 And ay was gude to me and mine;
 And now my dying charge I gie him—
 My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

"O bid him save their harmless lives,
 Frae dogs, and tods, and butchers' knives!
 But gie them gude cow-milk their fill,
 Till they be fit to fend themsel:
 And tens them duly, e'en and morn,
 Wi' tean o' hay and rips o' corn.

"And may they never learn the gait
 Of ither vile, wantonfu' pair!
 To slink through slaps, and reave, and steal,
 At stacks o' pease, or stacks o' hail.
 So may they, like their great forbears,
 For mony a year come through the shears:
 So wives will gie them him o' bread,
 And bairns greet for them when they're dead.

"My poor coop-lamb, my son and heir,
 O! bid him breed him up wi' care;
 And, if he live to be a beast,
 To put some havine in his breast;
 And warn him, what I wenna name,
 To stay content wi' yowen at hame;
 An' no to rin an' wear his cloot,
 Like ither menesless, graceless brot.

"And neist, my yowie, wily thing,
 Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
 O, may thou ne'er forgether up
 Wi' onie blawie, moorland coop;
 But ay keep mind to mop and mell
 Wi' sheep o' credit like thyse!

"And now my bairns, wi' my last breath,
 I leave my blessing wi' you bath:

And when you think upo' your miser,
 Mind to be kind to ane anither.

"Now, honest Hughie, dinna fail
 To tell my Master a' my tale;
 And bid him burn this cursed tether,
 And, for thy pains, thou'lt get my blether."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
 And clor'd her een among the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
 Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
 Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
 Past a' remeid;
 The last sad cap-stane o' his woe,
 Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
 That could see bister draw the tear,
 Or mak our hardie, dowie, wear
 The mourning weed;
 He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
 In Mailie dead.

Through a' the town she trotted by him;
 A lang half-mile she could dancery him;
 Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
 She ran with speed;
 A friend mair faithfu' ne'er came nigh him,
 Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
 And could behave herseel wi' mense;
 I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
 Through thirvish greed;
 Our Bardie, larely, keeps the spence
 Son' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
 Her living image in her yowe,
 Comes blessing to him owre the knowe,
 For him o' bread;
 And down the briny pearls rowe
 For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
 Wi' sweetest ket, and hairy hips;
 For her forbears were brought in ships
 Frae 'yon the Tweed;
 A bonier flesh ne'er cross'd the claps
 Than Mailie dead.

Wae worth the man who first did shape
 This vile warchandie thing—a rape!
 It maks gude fellows girn and gape,
 Wi' chockin' dread;
 An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
 For Mailie dead.

O' a' ye Bards on bonie Doon !
And wha on Ayr your chaster tune !
Come join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed !
His heart will never get aboon,
His Mailie dead !

THE BRIGS OF AYR.

INSCRIBED TO

J. BALLANTYNE, ESQ. AYR.

THE simple Bird, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry lough ;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green
thorn bush ;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast
thrill,
Or deep-son'd plover, grey, wild-whinling
o'er the bill ;
Shall he, nurs'd in the Peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy Independence heavily bred,
By early Poverty to hardship weav'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's
field ;
Shall he be guilty of their hirling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes ?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose ?
No ! though his artless strains he rudely
sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the
strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear re-
ward !
Still, if some gen'rous Patron's care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace ;
When Ballantyne befriends his humble
name,
And hauns the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom
swells,
The god-like blues, to give, alone excels.

.....

'Twas when the stacks got on their winter-
nap,
And thick and rapt were the toil-won crop ;
Potato-bings are snogged up free skath
Of coming Winter's hiving, frosty breath ;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumber'd buds and flowers, delicious
spoils,
Seal'd up with fragrant care in massive wicker
piles,

Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the
weak,
The death o' devils, smother'd wi' belemnite
rock ;
The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide ;
The feather'd field-masters, bound by Nature's
tie,
Sire, mothers, children, in one carnage lie :
(What warm, poetic heart, but only bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds !)
Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow
springs ;
Nae mair the grove in airy concert rings,
Except perhaps the Robin's whistling plox,
Proud o' the height o' some his half-jang
tree :

The hoary morn prelude the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noon-
tide blaze,

While thick the gossamer waves wauzon in
the rays :—

'Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
As night, within the ancient burgh of Ayr,
By whim inspir'd, or haply pent wi' care ;
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's * wheel'd the left
about ;

'Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate ;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd 'till he knew not where nor
why :

The drowsy Dingleton-clock † had number'd
two,

And Wallace-Tower ‡ had sworn the fact
was true :

The tide-swola Firth, with sullen sounding
roar,

Through the still night dash'd horses along
the shore :

All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e ;
The silent moon shone high o'er tower and
tree ;

The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently craning, o'er the glittering
stream.

When, lo ! on either hand the lightning
Bard,
The clanging sngh of whistling wings is
heard ;
Two dusky forms dart through the midnight
air,
Swift as the Gos † driven on the wheeling
hare ;

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.

† The two weeples

‡ The Gos-hawk, or Falcon.

Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape appears,
The lither Runners o'er the rising pier;
Our warlock Rhymer instantly decry'd
The Sprites that o'er the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sight'd is nae joke,
And ken the lings o' the spiritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a' they can explain
them,
And ev'n the very Deils they brawly ken
them.)

Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had wara'd lang,
Yet toughly dour, he had an unco bang.
New Brig was bush'd in a braw new coat,
That he at Londen frae ane Adams got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooch's a head,
Wi' virn and whirlygigums at the head.
The Gosh was stalking round with anxious
search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his a',
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thievish sneer to see his modish mien,
He down the water gies him this gude-s'en :-

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae
sheep-bank,
Ance ye were stock'd o'er frae bank to
bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
Though faith that day, I doubt, ye'll never
see;
There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a
boddle,
Some fewer whigmackers in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but little show your
maner,
Just mach about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheelbarrows tumble when they
meet,
Your roin'd, formless bulk o' stane, in time,
Compare wi' bonic brigs o' modern time?
There's men o' sense would tak the Ducat-
stream,*
Though they should cut the very sark and
swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings with the
view
Of sic an ugly, Gothic bulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
Tha'mony a year I've wad the flood an' tide;

* A neer ford, just above the Auld Brig.

And though wi' crazy wild I'm sair forlorn,
I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling
Coil,
Or stately Luger's mossy fountain ball,
Or where the Greenock winds his moonland
course,
Or haunted Garpal* draws his feeble source,
Around by blaw'ring winds and spouting
showers,
In mossy a torrent down his snaw-bruc rows;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring
spout,
Sweeps dams, and mills, and brigs, a' to the
gao;
And from Glenbuck,† down to the Ranton-
key,‡
Auld Ayr is just one heughen'd, tumbling
sea;
Then down ye'll buel, Deil nor ye never
rise!
And dash the gamble jumps up to the pouring
skies.
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture! growth, I needs must
say't o't!
The L. d be thankit that we've tint the
gao o't!
Gaunt, ghawly, ghawt-allowing edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jow, like precipices;
O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring caves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, mossy groves;
Windows and doors in nameless sculpture
dress,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblent;
Forms like some bottom stuary's dream,
The gray'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worldepp'd on the breasted
kneer,
And still the lacoon dread Cow wad be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air,
or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building
taste
Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;

* The banks of Garpal Water is one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-wearing beings, known by the name of Ghaisa, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

† The source of the river Ayr.

‡ A small landing place above the large key.

Fa only for a doited Monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
Or coits of latter times, who held the notion,
That sullen gloom was sterling, true devotion;

Fancies that our gude burgh deniest protection,
And soon may they expire, unless with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!

Ye worthy Provosts, an' mony a Bailie,
Who in the paths of righteousness did toil ay;
Ye dainty Deacons, and ye douce Conventers,
To whom our moderns are but cauncy-cleaners;

Ye godly Councils who hae bless'd this town,
Ye godly Brethren of the sacred gown,
Who meekly giv' your hurdies to the sinners;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers;

A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do?
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,

To see each melancholy elication;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begot the base, degen'rate race!
Nae langer Rec'r'd Men, their country's glory,

In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!

Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,
Mett ower a pint, or in the Council-house;
But stammer, corky-headed, graceless poetry,
The hearyment and ruin of the country;
Men, three-parts made by Tailors and by Barbers,

Who want your weel-hain'd gear on d....d
new Brigs and Harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through;

As for your priesthood, I can say but little,
Corbans and Clergy are a shot right kittle;
But under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd;
To loken them to your subd-world speed,
I needs must say, comparisons are odd.

In Ayr, Wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle
To mouth "a Citizen," a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,

In all the pomp of ignorant conceits;

Men who grew wise pluggin owre hops and raisins,

Or gather'd lib'ral views in bonds and scissions.
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shor'd them wuth a glimmer of his lamp,
And wou'd to Common-sense for ower be-try'd them,

Plain, dull Stupidity steps kindly in to aid them.

.....

What farther click-maclever might been said,

What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,

No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright;
Adown the glimmering stream they feath'ly danc'd;

Bright to the moon their various dances glanc'd;

They focus'd o'er the wat'ry glass so near,
The infant its scarce beat beneath their feet;

While awa of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling Bards heroic strains sang.
O had M'Laughlan, * thairgm-inspiring Sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band rattle,
When through his dear Sirenspeys they bore
with Highland rage,

Or, when they struck old Scotia's rushing air,

The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fares!

And ev'n his matchless hand with Sner touch inspir'd!

No guess could tell what instruments appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rang in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable Chief advanc'd in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-eagle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;

Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy;

And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye;
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;

Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,

By Hospitality with cloudless brow.

* A celebrated performer of Scottish music on the violin.

Next follow'd Courage, with his martial stride,
 From where the Fast wild-woody covers hide;
 Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
 A female form, came from the tower of Seair;
 Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
 From simple Carine, their long-lost shade;
 Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
 To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
 The broken iron instruments of death;
 At sight of whom our Sprites forgot their
 kindling wrath.

THE VOWELS.

A TALE.

'Twas where the birch and sounding thong
 are ply'd,
 The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
 Where ignorance her dark'ning vapour
 throws,
 And crutch directs the thick'ning blows;
 Upon a time, Sir A B C the great,
 In all his pedagogic powers clad,
 His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
 And call the trembling vowels to account.

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn
 sight,
 But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
 His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
 And flagrant from the scourge, he grunted, at!

Reluctant, E walk'd in: with piteous grace
 The jostling tears ran down his honest face!
 That name, that well-worn name, and all his
 own,
 Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
 The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound,
 Not all his mongrel diphthongs can com-
 pound;
 And next the title following close behind,
 He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assigns'd.

The cobweb'd, gothic dome resounded, Y!
 In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
 The pedant seeing his felon cudgel round,
 And knock'd the groaning vowel to the
 ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
 The wailing minstrel of despairing woes:
 Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
 Might there have learn'd new mysteries of
 his art:

So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
 His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
 The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
 In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his rights,
 Baptiz'd him Eu, and kick'd him from his
 sight.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.*

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
 The curlers quit their roaring play,
 And hanger'd mankind sa'en her way
 To hail-yards green,
 While faithless snows ilk step betray
 Where she has been.

The thresher's weary singin'-tree
 The lea-lang day had tired me;
 And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
 Far i' the west,
 Ben i' the spaces, right pensivellie,
 I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the light-check,
 I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
 That fill'd, wi' hoar-provoking smuck,
 The cold clay biggin;
 And heard the restless rasons speak
 About the riggin.

All in this mottle, minky clime,
 I backward mair'd on wasted time,
 How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 An' done naething,
 But stringin' blethers up in rhyme,
 For fools to sing.

Had I to good advice been harkin',
 I might, by this, hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank, and chirk'd
 My cash account:
 While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-harkin',
 Is a' the amount!

I started, man'ring, blockhead! roof!
 And hear'd on high my waukin' loof,
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith,
 That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
 Till my lan breath....

* Duan, a term of Quian's, for the differ-
 ent divisions of a digressive poem. See his
 Cuh-Lods.

When click ! the spring the snick did draw ;
And jee ! the door gaped in the wa' ;
And by my ingle-low I saw,
 Now blazing bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, brow,
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whistle ;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht,
I glow'd as e'eric's I'd been dush
 In some wild glen ;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blush'd,
 And napp'd ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, graceful, round her brows ;
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
 By that name token ;
And come to stop those reckless vows,
 Would soon been broken.

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace,"
Was strongly marked in her face ;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her ;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
 Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan chosen ;
Till half a leg was scampily seen ;
And such a leg ! my bonnie Jean
 Could only peer it ;
Sae straight, sae taper, tight, and clean,
 Name else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish haze,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew ;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
 A haurie grand ;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
 A well-known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost ;
There, mountains to the skies were tost ;
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
 With surging foam ;
There, distant shone Ait's lofty bow,
 The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his fan-futch'd
 Sooks ;
There, well-fed Iwinge usitly thuds ;
Auld hermit Ayr stae through his woods,
 On to the shore ;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
 With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient burrough rear'd her head ;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
 She boasts a race,
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
 And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
 I could discern ;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dier,
 With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race * heroic swell,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
 In sturdy blows ;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
 Their Guthron foes.

His Country's Saviour, † mark him well !
Bold Richardson's ‡ heroic swell ;
The chief on Sark § who glorious fell,
 In high command ;
And He whom ruthless fates expel
 His native land.

There, where a scupper'd Fictish shade ‖
Salk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race pourtray'd
 In colours strong ;
Bold, soldier-fram'd, undismay'd
 They strode along.

Through many a wild, romantic grove, ¶
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love)
 In musing mood,
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
 Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe **
The learned Sire and Son I saw,

* The Wallaces.

† William Wallace.

‡ Adam Wallace, of Richardson, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.

§ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of the Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.

‖ Colias, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family-seat of the Montgomeries of Colla-Bield, where his burial-place is still shown.

¶ Baskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice Clerk (Miller).

** Carriac, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart.

To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their love,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adorn.

Brydone's brave ward * I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye ;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With mixing-deep, amaz'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Pair ;
A whispering thro' did witness bear,
Of kinder sweets,
When with an elder singer's air,
She did me greet :

" All hail ! my own inspired Bard !
Is me thy native Muse regard !
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low !
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

" Know, the great Genius of this land
Has many a light, aerial band,
Who all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

" They Scotia's race among them share ;
Some fix the soldier on to dare ;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart ;
Some teach the Bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

" 'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour ;
Or 'mid the venal Scourge's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot's lore,
And grace the hand.

" And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

" Hence Fullarton, the brave and young ;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue ;
Hence sweet, harmonious Beattie sung
His ' Minstrel' lays,
Or sore, with noble ardour sung,
The warrior's lays.

* Colonel Fullarton.

" To lower orders are assign'd,
The humbler ranks of human kind,
The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
The Artisan ;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

" When yellow waves the many grain,
The threaten'ing storm some strongly rain ;
Some teach to mellow the plain
With tillage-skill ;
And some instruct the shepherd-vaile,
By the o'er the hill.

" Some hint the lover's harmless galle ;
Some teach the maiden's artless smile ;
Some soothe the labourer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his courage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

" Some bounded to a distant-space,
Explore as large man's infant race,
To mark the embryonic trace
Of rustic Bard ;
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

" Of these am I—COLLA my name ;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r ;
I mark'd thy embryonic tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

" With future hope, I oft would gaze
Fond on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fird at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

" I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar ;
Or when the North his fiery more
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar,
Struck thy young eye.

" Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm-cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

" When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely walk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In penive walk.

" When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

" I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild and thee pleasure's devious way,
Milded by fancy's meteor ray,
By passion driven ;
But yet the Light that led away
Was Light from Heaven.

" I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains,
Thy fame extends ;
And some, the pride of Corla's plains,
Become thy friends.

" Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow ;
Or wake the hoarse-moaning thro',
With Shemstone's art ;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

" Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows ;
Though large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

" Then never murmur nor repine ;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine ;
And trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor kings' regard,
Can give a bliss o'er-muching thine,
A rustic Bard.

" To give my counsels all in one,
Thy useful flame will careful fan ;
Preserve the Dignity of Man,
With soul erect ;
And trust, the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

" And wear thou this"—the solemn said,
And bound the Holly round my head :
The polish'd leaves and herries red,
Dad rustling play ;
And like a passing thought, the fled
In light away.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK II.

HUMOROUS AND DESCRIPTIVE.

THE

JOLLY BEGGARS.

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

WARRIANT leaves bestow the yird,
Or waverin' like the hauckie-bird,
Bedim could Boreas' blast;
When hail-storms drive wi' binner skyes,
And infants frosts begin to bite,
In hoary craneruch dress;
As night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Foutie-Nannie's held the splore,
To drink their ows doddies:
Wi' quaffing, and laughing,
They ranced an' they sang;
Wi' jumping an' thumping,
The very girdle rang.

First, seize the fire, in auld, red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack s' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' 'squeech an' blankets warm,
She blinket on her soldier;
An' ay he gies the toxic drab
The ither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an' a wame dish:
Ilk smack will, did crack will,
Just like a colger's whip;
Then staggering, an' swaggering,
He roar'd this dirty up:—

AIR.

TUNE—"Soldier's Joy."

I am a son of Mars,
Who have been in many wars,
And threw my cuns and scurs
Wherever I come;
This here was for a wench,
And that ither in a trench,
When welcoming the French
At the sound of the drum.
Lal de dandle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I past
Where my leader breach'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast
On the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade
When the gallant game was play'd,
And the Maw law was laid
At the sound of the drum.
Lal de dandle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtin,
Among the floating ban'riet,
And there I left for witness,
An arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me,
With Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my scumps
At the sound of a drum.
Lal de dandle, &c.

And now though I must beg,
With a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag
Hanging over my bum,

I'm as happy with my wallet,
My bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet
To follow the drum.
Lal de dandle, &c.

What though with hoary locks,
I must vand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks
Oftentimes for a home;
When the tother bag I sell,
And the tother bottle sell,
I could meet a troop of hell
At the sound of the drum.
Lal de dandle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the ketars shook
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frightened ransons backward look,
An' seek the benmost bore:
A Merry Andrew 't' the nook,
He skirl'd out, "Encore!"
But up arose the martial chuck,
An' laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

TUNE—"Sodger Laddie."

I once was a maid,
Though I cannot tell when,
And all my delight is—
In proper young men;
Some one of a troop
Of dragons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond
Of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

The first of my loves
Was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering
Drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight,
And his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was
With my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

But the godly old chaplain
Left him in the lurch,
So the sword I forsook
For the sake of the church;
He vancur'd the soon,
And I risk'd the bow,
'Twas then I proved false
To my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

Full soon I grew sick
Of my sanctified cot,
The regiment at large
For a husband I got;
From the gilded spoon
To the fire I was ready,
I asked no more
But a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

But the Peace it reduc'd me
To beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy
At Cunningham fair;
His rap regimental
They flatter'd me gaudy,
My heart it rejoice'd
At my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

And now I have liv'd—
I know not how long,
And still I can join
In a cup and a song:
But whilst with both hands
I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero,
My sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de la!, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew, in the nook
Sagging wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus took,
Between themselves they were as busy.
At length wi' drink and counting dizzy,
He stouter'd up an' made a face;
Then turn'd and laid a smack on Grizzy,
Syne ran'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

TUNE—"Auld Sir Simon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's foo,
Sir Knave is a fool in a sculoon;
He's there but a 'prentice, I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a book,
And I held aea to the school;
I fear I my talent mistook,
But what will ye hae of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck;
A birrie's the half of my craft;
But what could ye ether expect
Of one that's awowedly daf?

I once was tied up like a wirk,
For civilly swearing and quodding;
I once was abus'd i' the Kirk,
For tawling a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let nobody name wi' a jeer;
There's ev'n, I am tauld, i' the court,
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad,
Maks faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our moonshank squad,
It's RIVALSHIP just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry,
The chief that's a fool to himself,
Gude Lord! he's far daffar than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then mair outspak a rascal's carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to creak the merlin;
For mony a pannie she had hooked,
And had in monie a well been dooked;
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary is the waeftu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobe she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman:—

AIR.

TUNE—"O, an' ye were dead, Gudeman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lowland lasses he held in scorn;
But he wail was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman!

CHORUS.

Sing, hey, my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho, my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the land
Was mair for my John Highlandman!

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' gude claymores down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did regon,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged a' frae Tweed to Spey,
An' he'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lowland lass he feared none,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them ev'ry one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn
Departed joys that ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd as organs and fairs to driddle,
Her strappan limb an' gauzy middle,
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three;
Then, in an airy key,
The wee Apollo
Set off, wi' allegretto glee,
His gipsy solo.

AIR.

TUNE—"Whistle ower the lave o't."

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear;
And then your every care and fear
May whistle ower the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest will to wife or maid,
Was, whistle ower the lave o't.

At kirs and weddings we're be there,
And O nae nicely's we will fare!
We'll house about ill Daddie Care
Sings whistle ower the lave o't.
I am, &c.

See merrily's the bawes we'll pyke,
And run pursels about the dyke;
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll—whistle ower the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heart's o' charms,
And while I kinde hair on chairms,
Hanger, could, and a' sic harms,
May whistle ower the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy Caird,
As well as poor Gut-craiper;
He took the fiddler by the beard,
And drew a rusty rapier—
He swore by a' was swearing worth,
To spit him like a plover,
Unless he would from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever:

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor Tweedledot,
Upon his bunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace, wi' ruefu' face,
And see the quarrel ended:
But though his little heart did grieve,
When round the tinker press'd her,
He feign'd to snore in his sleeve
When thus the Caird address'd her:—

AIR.

TUNE—"Clout the Cauldron."

My bonie lan, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my nation;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation;
I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
To go and clout the cauldron.
I've ta'en the gold, &c.

Despite that shrimp, that wither'd limp,
With a' his noise and caprin;
And take a share with those that bear
The budget and the apron!
And by that snow! my faith and houp,
And by that dear Kilbaigie!
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er wear my craigie.
And by that snow! &c.

RECITATIVO.

The Caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair,
In his embraces sunk;
Partly wi' love o'ercome and sair,
And partly she was drunk:
Sir Vindoon, with an air,
That show'd a man o' spunk,
With'd union between the pair,
And made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But archin' Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a chariv—
A sailor rak'd her fore and aft
Behind the chicken-castle.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's a' craft,
Though limping wi' the spavie,
He hirp'd up, and lap, like daff,
And shor'd them Dainty Davie
To boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus lined;
Though Fortune sat upon him laid,
His heart she ever min'd it.
He had no wish but—to be glad,
No want but—when he thirned;
He had naught but—to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night:—

AIR.

TUNE—"For a' that, and a' that."

I am a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle-folks, and a' that,
But Homer like, the glowrin byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but one, I've twa behind,
I've wife enough for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' nawk,
Canalia's horn, and a' that;
But there it measures, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it will
A mortal sin to throw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, and a' that;
But for how lang the fit may wing,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft ha'e put me daff,
They've us'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and "Here's the sex!"
I like the jads for a' that.

* Homer is allowed to be the oldest ballad-singer on record.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that,
My dearest BURNS, to do them gude,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sang the Bard—and Nannie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause
Re-echo'd from each mouth !
They took'd their pocks, they pawn'd their
duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowin drouth.
Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The Poet did request,
To loose his pack, and wale a sang
A ballad o' the best !
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, and found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

TUNE—"Jolly mortals, fill your glasses."

See the smoking bowl before us !
Mark our jovial, ragged ring !
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing—

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected ;
Liberty's a glorious feast !
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title ? what is treasure ?
What is reputation's care ?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where !
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day ;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove ?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love ?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes ;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets !
Here's to all the wandering train !
Here's our ragged brass and callets !
One and all cry out, " Amen !"
A fig, &c.

HALLOWEEN.*

[The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood ; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations ; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, (if any such should honour the author with a perusal) to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own.]

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train ;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm than all the glories art.
GOLDSMITH.

I.

Uprose that night when fairies light
On Canillo's Downland + dence,
Or owre the lags, in splendid blare,
On uprighly courters prance ;
Or for Colcan the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams ;
There, up the Cove, I to stray and rove
Among the rocks and streams
To sport that night.

* It is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands ; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night, to hold a grand anniversary.

+ Certain hille, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Canillo.

‡ A noted cavern near Colcan-house, called The Cove of Colcan ; which, like Canillo Downland, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.

II.

Among the bonny winding banks,
Where Doon rins wimplin, clear,
Where Bruce * ance rul'd the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did converse,
To burn their nix, and pou their stocks,
And haud their Halloween
Fu' blythe that night.

III.

The lasses faw, and cleanly neat,
Mair brow than when they're fair;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hears leaf, and warm, and kin';
The lads are trig, wi' woper-habs,
Weel knotted on their garters,
Some unce blaw, and some wi' gabs,
Ger lasses' hearts gang warin
Whiles fast at night.

IV.

Then first and foremost, through the kail,
Their stocks + mean a' be taught ance;
They neck their een, and gape and wale,
For muckle aces and straught aces,
Fear has'tel Will fell off the drift,
And wander'd through the bow-kail,
And pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a saw-tail,
See how't that night.

V.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar and cry a' thro'ther;
The very wee things, uddlin, rin
Wi' stocks out-owt their shouther;

* The famous family of that name, the ancestor of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

+ The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. In being big or lude, straught or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earb, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the cunock, that is, the heart of the uum, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stums, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the rants, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whose chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the rants, the names in question.

And gif the cunock's sweet or sour,
Wi' jocklegs they taste them;
Syne cooily, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they place them
To lie that night.

VI.

The lasses upw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn; *
But Rob slips out, and jinks about,
Behind the muckle thorn;
He grippet Nelly hard and fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her top-pickle main was loo,
When kintlin in the fause-house †
Wi' him that night.

VII.

The auld gudewife's weel boarded nit;
Are round and round divided,
And monie lads' and lasses' fins
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, countrie, side by side,
And burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owt the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

VIII.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tangle e'e;
Wha 'twas the wadde tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
She says in to herself:
He bleat'd owre her, and she owre him,
As they would never mair part;
Till faul' he staved up the lum,
And Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

* They go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c. makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is furthest exposed to the wind; this he calls a Fause-house.

‡ Burning the nix is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular not, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

IX.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail rone,
Was brunt wi' primae Mallie;
And Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie's;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
And her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swore by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

X.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She gae herself and Rob in;
In loving breeze they sweetly join,
Till white in aae they're sobbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to look for't;
Rob, awaenins, gried her bonnie mou,
Fu' cozie in the nook for't,
Unseen that night.

XI.

Bot Merren sat behind their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She les't them gashin at their cracks,
And slips out by herel;
She through the yard the nearest tacks,
And to the kiln she goes then,
And darklins graip for the banks,
And in the blue-clue throws then, *
Right fear't that night.

XII.

And ay she win't, and ay she sews,
I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the gat,
Gode L., d! but she was quakin!
Eus whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a haak-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin
To spier that night.

XIII.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?"

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Sital out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clus of blue yarn; wind it in a new clus off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, Who holds? i. e. Who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.

I'll eat the apple * at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnnie:
She fust her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was nae vap'rin,
She notic't na, an aile brunt
Her braw new worst apron
Out through that night.

XIV.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
How daur you try sic sportin,
As seek the foul Thief any place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a bower!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a aye has gotten a fright,
And liv'd and died delectet
On sic a night.

XV.

"Ae halst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure,
I was na past fifteen:
The limmer had been could and wat,
And stuff was ousen green;
And aye a ransin kirk we gat,
And just on Halloween
It fell that night.

XVI.

"Our sibble-rig was Rab M'Green,
A clever, sturdy fellow;
He's ain' gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed, + I mind it weel,
And he made ousen light o't;
But monie a day was ay himsel,
He was unairly frighted
That vera night."

* Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; cut an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

+ Sital out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, Hemp-seed I saw thee; hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee. Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, Come after me, and show thee; that is, show thyself; in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, Come after me, and harrow thee.

XVII.

Then up gat Scotland Jamie Fleck,
 And he swore by his conscience,
 That he could aw hemp-seed a peck;
 For it was a' but nonsense;
 The auld gudman caught awn the peck,
 And out a handfu' gied him;
 Sync had him slip frae 'mang the folk,
 Sometime when nae one see'd him,
 And try't that night.

XVIII.

He marches through amang the stacks,
 Though he was something murtin;
 The grip he for a harrow tak, s
 And hauls at his curpin;
 And ev'ry now and then, he says,
 "Hemp-seed I saw thee,
 And her that is to be my lass,
 Come after me and draw thee,
 As fast this night."

XIX.

He whistled up Lord Lenox' march,
 To keep his courage cheery;
 Although his hair began to arch,
 He was aw flay'd and eerie;
 Till presently he hears a squeak,
 And then a grane and grundle;
 He by his shouther gae a crack,
 And tumbld wi' a winkle
 Out-owre that night.

XX.

He roar'd a horrid murder-about,
 In dreadfu' desperation;
 And young and auld came rinnin out,
 To hear the auld narration;
 He swore 'twas birkie Jean McCrow,
 Or crouchie Merrian Humphie,
 Till stop! she trotted through them a';
 And wha was it but Gramphie
 Answer that night!

XXI.

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen
 To win three wecht o' naething;*
 But for to meet the Deil her lane,
 She put but little faith in:

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doort, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger that she being, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat

She gies the herd a pickle nibe,
 And twa red cheekit apples,
 To watch, while for the barn she err,
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples
 That very night.

XXII.

She turns the key wi' cannie throw,
 And owre the threshold ventures;
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
 Sync haudly in she enters;
 A rason cast'd up the wa',
 And she cried, L...d preserve her!
 And ran through midden-hole and a',
 And pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
 Fu' fast that night.

XXIII.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
 They hecht him some fine brow and;
 It chanc'd the stack he faddom'd thrice,*
 Was timmer-prop for throwin;
 He takes a winkle, auld moss-oak,
 For some black, grasseme carlin;
 And loot a wine, and drew a stroke,
 Till skin in hippos came haulin
 Aff's nerves that night.

XXIV.

A wanton widow Leerie was,
 As canty as a kisthen;
 But och! that night, amang the shaws,
 She got a fearfu' scullin!
 She through the whins, and by the cairn,
 And owre the hill gaed scrievin,
 Where three laird's lands met at a burn,†
 To dip her left shirt-sleeve in,
 Was bent that night.

it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or outline, marking the employment of station in life.

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bear-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal companion.

† You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring or rivulet, where three laird's lands meet, and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

XXV.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
 As through the gles it wimp'd;
 Whyles round a rocky scar it strays;
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpl'd;
 Whyles glimer'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
 Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel,
 Unseen that night.

XXVI.

Among the brachens, on the brae,
 Between her and the moon,
 The Doll, or else an outler quey,
 Gat up and gat a croon;
 Poor Lizzie's heart main lap the hood,
 Near her rock heigh the jumpit,
 But mist her fit, and in the pool
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
 Wi' a plunge that night.

XXVII.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
 The luggies three^a are ranged,
 And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
 To see them duly chang'd:
 Auld uncle John, who wedlock's joys
 Sin Mar's-year did desire,
 Because he gat the woom dish thrice,
 He heav'd them on the fire
 In wrath that night.

XXVIII.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
 I wat they did na weary;
 And unco tales, and funnie jokes,
 Their sports were cheap and cheery:
 Till butter'd co'us,⁺ wi' fragrant lunt,
 Set a' their gabs a-steevin;
 Syne, wi' a social glass o' urant,
 They parted off careerin'
 Fu' bliths that night.

^a Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid: if in the foul, a widow: if in the empty dish, he foretels, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

⁺ Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween supper.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Cie him strong drink until he wink,
 That's sinking in despair!
 And liquor gude, to fire his blade,
 That's press'd wi' grief and care:
 There let him bouse, and deep carouse,
 Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
 Till he forget his loves or debts,
 As' minds his griefs no more.
 PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

Let other poets raise a fracas,
 'Sout wines, an' wines, an' drunken Bacchus,
 Wi' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
 And grate our lag;
 I sing the juice Scots bear can make us,
 In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! gude auld Scotch Drink!
 Whether through wimpling worms thou sink,
 Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink,
 In glorious foam,
 Inspire me, till I lip and wink,
 To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
 And Ails set up their awnie horn,
 And Pease and Beans, at e'en and morn,
 Perfume the plain,
 Lest me on thee, John Barleycorn,
 Thou king o' grain!

On thee a' Scotland chews her cood,
 In soule scones, the wale o' food!
 Or tumbler in the boiling flood
 Wi' kail an' beef;
 But when thou pour'st thy strong heart's blood,
 There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, and keeps us livin',
 Though life's a gift not worth receivin',
 When heavy dragg'd wi' pine and grievin':
 But, oil'd by thee,
 The wheels o' life gae downhill, scrievin',
 Wi' raulin glee.

Thou clear the head o' doited Lear;
 Thou cheers the heart o' droopin' Care;
 Thou strings the nerves o' labour sair,
 At's weary toil;
 Thou even brightens dark Despair
 Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in many siller weed,
 Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
 Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
 The poor man's wine;
 His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
 Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts,
 But thee, what were our fairs and runs?
 Er'a godly meetings o' the season,
 By thee inspir'd,
 When payin' they beseege the tents,
 Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
 O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
 Or reckon on a New-year mornin'
 In cog or bicker,
 An' just a wee drop o' riginal burn in,
 An' gawg sucker!

When Vulcan giea his bellows breath,
 An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
 O rare to see thee fix a an' fraith
 I' the luggit ramp!
 Then Barnewin comes on like death
 At every chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for sin or steel;
 The brawnie, hainie, ploughman chiel,
 Brings hard owrchip, wi' surdy wheel,
 The wrong forchammer,
 Till black an' suddie ring an' reel,
 Wi' dinome clamour.

When skirlin' wannies see the light,
 Thou make the gossip clatter bright,
 How fumble coof their desires slight;
 Wae worth the name!
 Nae howdie gets a social night,
 Or plack frae them.

When neighbors anger at a plea,
 An' just as wud as wud can be,
 How easy can the harley-bree
 Cement the quarrel!
 It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
 To raise the barrel.

Alack! that e'er my Muse has reason
 To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
 But monie daily ween their wesson
 Wi' liquors nice,
 An' hardly in a winter's season,
 E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
 Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
 Twine monie a poor, daylt, drunken hank
 O' half his days;
 An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
 To her worst fiend.

Ye Scots wha wish auld Scotland weel!
 Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
 Poor plackless deevils like myself!
 Is seen you ill,
 Wi' blinse, deathfu' wines to mell,
 Or foreign gill.

May gravel round his blather wrench,
 And gout torment him inch by inch,
 Wha twine his grumle wi' a glatchi
 O' sour disdain,
 Out owre a glass o' whisky punch
 Wi' honest men.

O Whisky! saul o' plays an' pranks!
 Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
 When wanting thee, what useless cranks
 Are my poor verses!
 Thou comes—they rantle i' their ranks
 At ither's a . . . s!

There, Farintosh! O sadly lost!
 Scotland, lament frae coast to coast!
 Now colic grips, an' barkin' hoast,
 May kill us a';
 For loyal Forbes's chariv'd hoast
 Is us'en awa!

Thae curst horse-bitches o' the Excise,
 Wha mak the whisky walk their prize!
 Hand up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
 There—seize the blinkers!
 And bae them up in brumstane pies
 For poor d . . . d drinkers!

Fortune! if thou'lt but gie me will,
 Hale breeks, a scone, an' whisky gill,
 An' roush o' rhyme to rave at will,
 Tak a' the rest,
 An' don't about as thy blind skill
 Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S

EARNEST CRY AND
PRAYER *

TO THE

SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best!
How art thou lost!.....

PARODY ON MILTON.

Ye Irish Lords, ye Knights and Squires,
 Wha REPRESENT our burghs and shires,

* This was written before the Act about
 the Scotch Distilleries, of session 1786; for
 which Scotland and the Author return their
 most grateful thanks.

And dourly manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Poet's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my respect Muse is borne!
Your Honour's hearts wi' grief 'twad
 pierce,
To see her sitting on her a . . . e,
 Low i' the dust,
And scrievin out prosaic verse,
 And like to burst!

Tell them wha has the chief direction,
Scotland and me's in great affliction,
E'er since they laid that cruel restriction
 On *aqua vitae*;
And rouse them up to strong conviction,
 And move their pity.

Stand forth, and tell yon Premier Youth
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine and Scotland's drouth,
 His servants humble;
The muckle Deevil blow ye south,
 If ye dissemble!

Does any great man glunch and gloom,
Speak out, and never fash your thumb!
Let poon or pensions sink or boom
 Wi' them wha grant 'em,
If honestly they canna come,
 Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, and edge your back,
 And hum and haw;
But raise your arm, and tell your crack,
 Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greenin ower her thrills,
Her muchkin snop as toom's a whistle;
An' d . . n'd excitemen in a bussel,
 Seizin a snail,
Triumphant, crushin's like a maul,
 Or lamp shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler right behind her,
And cheek-for-chow, a chuffie winner,
 Collapsing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter,
 Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's-blode rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's pot
 Thus dung in naives,
And plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
 By gallowa knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod i' the mire, clean out o' sight!
But could I like Montgom'ries fight,
 Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sick-necks I wad draw
 tight,
 And tie some hose well.

God bless your Honours! can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie Carlin greet,
And no get warmly to your feet,
 An' gar them hear it,
And tell them wi' a patriot heat,
 Ye winna bear it?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
And wi' rhetoric, clause on clause,
 To mak harangues;
Then echo through St. Stephen's wa's
 Auld Scotland's wrongs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I've warren;
Thee, aith-detecting, chase Kilkerran;*
And that glib-gabber Highland baron,
 The laird o' Graham;†
And aye, a chap that's d . . n'd auld-farran,
 Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie, Noorland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay;
And Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
 And monie others,
Wham auld Democritus or Tully
 Might own for brethren.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her keule;
Or, faith I'll wad my new plough-petle,
 You'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin whistle,
 Another sang.

This while she's been in crankout mood,
Her lair Millie's fir'd her blade:
(Dail na they never mair do good,
 Play'd her that plinkie!)

And now she's like to run red-wad
 About her Whisky.

And L . . d, if aince they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kiln,
And, dark and pinol as her beln,
 She'll tak the streets,
And rin her whistle to the hilt
 I' the first she meets!

* Sir Adam Ferguson.

† The present Duke of Montrose (1860).

For G. d sake, first then speak her fair,
And strait her cannie wi' the hair,
And to the muckle house repair,
 Wi' instant speed,
And strive, wi' a' your wits and lears,
 To get remed.

Yon ill-tongu'd stinkler, Charlie Fox,
May want you wi' his jeers and mocks;
But gie him't her, my heavy rock!
 E'en cove the caddie;
And send him to his dicing-box
 And sportin' lady.

Tell yon gude blade o' auld Boroanock's,
I'll be his debt twa macklam hannocks,
And drink his health in auld Nanos
 Tinnock's *

 Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,
 Wad kindly seek.

Could he some COMMUTATION brooch,
I'll pledge my aith in gude bruid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach,
 Nor crudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch,
 The COALITION !

Auld Scotland has a rascal tongue,
She's just a Devil wi' a rong;
And if she promise auld or young
 To mak their part,
Though by the neck she should be strang,
 She'll no desert.

And now, ye chosen FIVE-AND-FOURTY,
May aill your Mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a minister grow dirty,
 And kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
 Before his face.

Cod bless your Honour a' your days,
Wi' soups o' kail and bruns o' claise,
In spite o' a the thievish kais
 That haunt St. Jamie's !
Your humble Poet sings and prays,
 While Rob his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-narv'd slaves, in warmer skies
See future wines, rich claustr'ing, rise;

* A worthy old House of the Author's in
Mauchline, where he sometimes studied po-
litics over a glass of gude auld Scotch Drink.

Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
 But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her free-born, martial boys,
 Tak off their Whisky.

What though their Phobus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms, and beauty charms !
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
 The stented groves,
Or bounded forth, dishonour arms
 In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shoulder;
They downa hide the stink o' powder;
Their handless thought's a hank'ring swither
 To stan' or rin,
Tell skelp—a shoo—they're aff, a' throwier,
 To save their skins.

But being a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
 And there's the foe;
He has nae thought but how to kill
 Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him,
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him,
Wi' bludey hand a welcome gies him;
 And when he fa's,
His latest draughts o' breathing lea's him
 In faint buzzes.

Sages their solemn een may weck,
And raise a philosophic rock,
And physically cannot weck,
 In climate and season;
But tell me Whisky's name in Greek,
 I'll tell the reason.

SCOTLAND, my auld, respected Mither !
Though whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till where ye sit, on craps o' heather,
 Ye tise your dam;
FREEDOM and WHISKY gang thagither,
 Tak off your dram !

LINES

ON AN

INTERVIEW WITH LORD DAER.

Twas wot ye all whom it concerns,
I Rhymed Robin, alias Burns,
 October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
See far I sprinkled up the brow,
 I dinner'd wi' a Lord !

I've been at drunken Writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mong godly Friends,
Wi' reverence be it spoken;
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
Their hydra drouth did stoken.

But wi' a Lord—stand out my thin,
A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son,
Up higher yet my honnet;
And sic a Lord—lang Scotch ell's twa,
Our Peerage, he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But, oh for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To shew Sir Barty's williart glow'r,
And how he war'd and stammer'd,
When gowan, as if led wi' branks,
And stampan' on his ploughman chanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
And at his Lordship steal'd a look,
Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense and social glee,
And (what surpris'd me) modesty,
I mark'd nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The fiend a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
Henceforth to meet, with unconcern,
One rank as well's another;
Nae honest, worthy man need care,
To meet with noble, youthful Daer,
For he but means a brother.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S

PEREGRINATIONS

THROUGH

SCOTLAND, COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidskirk to Johnny Grose's;
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it;
A child's among you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll pen it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgey wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, howlet-haunted biggin,*
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to aye ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' Dells, they say, L . . d wee's! colleaguin
At some black art.—

Ilk ghain that haunes auld ha' or cham'ber,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamor,
And you deep read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight b . . es!

It's tauld he was a sodger breed,
And aye wad rather fa'e than fled;
But now he's quit the spartie blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And ta'en the—Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airm caps and jinglin jackets,†
Wad hand the Lochians three in tackets,
A towmon gude;
And parrich-pans, and auld saut-buckets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
Auld Tubalrain's fire-shool and fender;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the Witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,
The cap of Adam's phillibeg;
The knife that nicked Abel's Craig
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulting joecieleg,
Or lang-kail gallie.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For mickle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Gude fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

* Vide his Antiquities of Scotland.

† Vide his Treasure on Ancient Armour
and Weapons.

Now, by the pow'r o' verse and prose !
 Thou art a dainty chieft, O Grouse !—
 Whas'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
 They sair missa' thee ;
 I'd take the rascal by the nose,
 Wad say, Shame fa' thee !

ON

A SCOTCH BARD

GONE TO

THE WEST INDIES.

A' ye wha live by mugs o' drink,
 A' ye wha live by cramo-clink,
 A' ye wha live and never think,
 Come mourn wi' me !
 Our BILLY'S gien us a' a jink,
 And owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye raslin' bore,
 Wha dearly like a random-splorr,
 Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
 In social key ;
 For now he's taen anither shore,
 And owre the sea.

The bonnie lassies weel may miss him,
 And in their dear FATHER'S place him !
 The widows, wives, and a' may bless him,
 Wi' tearfu' e'e ;
 For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
 That's owre the sea.

O Fortune ! they hae room to grumble ;
 Hada thou taen aff some drowy hummie,
 Wha can do nought but fyke and fumble,
 'Twad been nae plea ;
 But he was gleg as any wumie,
 That's owre the sea.

Auld candle Kyle may weepart weat,
 And main them wi' the sun, an' mear ;
 'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
 In flinders flee ;
 He was her LAUREAT monie a year,
 That's owre the sea.

He saw misfortune's could nor-wat
 Lang mourning up a biper blatt ;
 A jillet brak his heart at last,
 Ill may she be !
 So, took a bier afore the mat,
 And owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
 On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
 Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
 Could ill agree ;
 So, row'd his hordies in a hammock,
 And owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
 Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in ;
 Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding ;
 He deat it free ;
 The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
 That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
 And hap him in a cozie bier ;
 Ye'll find him aye a dainty chieft,
 And fou o' glee !
 He wad na wrang'd the vera dell,
 That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie !
 Your native soil was right ill-willie ;
 But may ye flourish like a lily,
 Now bonnie !
 I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
 Thoo' owre the sea.

EXTEMPORE

ON THE LATE

MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE.

Author of the Philosophy of Natural History, and Member of the Antiquarian and Royal Societies of Edinburgh.

.....To Crechallan * came
 The old cock'd hat, the grey sartour, the same ;
 His bristling beard just rising in its might,
 'Twas four long nights and days to shaving-night ;
 His uncomb'd, grizzly locks, wild-staring,
 chuck'd
 A head, for thought profound and clear, un-
 match'd ;
 Yet though his cannie Wit was biting, red,
 His Heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

* Mr. Smellie and Burns were both members of a club in Edinburgh, under the name of the Crechallan Franciscans.—Ed.

THE COXCOMB.

A SKETCH.*

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight;
Who loves his own smart shadow in the
specie,

Better than e'er the fairest she he meets.
A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
Learn'd VIVE LA BAGATELLE, ET VIVE
L'AMOUR:

So, travel'd monkeys their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But more his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must
mend.

FRAGMENT,

INSCRIBED

TO THE RIGHT HON.

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and
unite!

How virtue and vice blend their black and
their white!

How genius, th' illaustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contra-
diction—

I sing: if these mortals, the critics, should
bustle,

I care not, not I, let the critics go whistle.

* This Sketch seems to be one of a series, intended for a projected work, under the title of "The Poet's Progress." This character was sent as a specimen, accompanied by a letter to Professor Dugald Stewart, in which it is thus noticed:—"The fragment beginning, 'A little, upright, pert, tart,' &c. I have not shown to any man living, till I now send it to you. It forms the postulate, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching."

But now for a Patron, whose name and
whose glory
At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Then first of our orators, first of our wits;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem more
lucky hits;

With knowledge so vast, and with judgment
so strong,

No man with the half of 'em e'er went far
wrong;

With passions so potent, and fancies so
bright,

No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite
right,

A sorry, poor, misbegot son of the Muses,
For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good L..d, what is man! for as simple
he looks,

Do but try to develope his books and his
crooks!

With his depths and his shallows, his good
and his evil,

All in all he's a problem must puzzle the
Devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely
labours,

That, like th' old Hebrew walking-stick,
ran up its neighbours:

Mankind are his show box—a friend, would
you know him?

Full the string, ruling passion, the picture
will show him.

What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
One trifling particular, Truth, should have
mis'd him!

For, in spite of his fine theoretic positions,
Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities eack to its tribe,
And think human nature they truly de-
scribe;

Have you found this or t'other? there's more
in the wind,

As by one drunken fellow his comrades
you'll find.

But such is the flaw, or the depth of the
plan,

In the make of that wonderful creature,
call'd Man,

No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor even two different shades of the
same,

Though like as was ever twin brother to
brother,

Possessing the one shall imply you've the
other.

ON

PASTORAL POETRY.

Hail, Poet! thou nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae twerv'd
Free common sense, or sunk enerv'd
 'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And oh! lower aft thy joos hae starv'd,
 'Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lizzie, why thy train amang,
While loud, the tramp's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp along
 To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
 But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton drives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knarlin, till him rives
 Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
 Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, who matches?
They're no herd's ballads, Mair's catches;
Squire Pope but buns his skinklin patches
 O' heathen mair;
I pass by hundreds, nameless wretches,
 That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nae the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
 And rural grace;
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian share
 A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan!
There's ane; come ferrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behind the hallan,
 A chiel as clever;
The teeth o' Time may gnaw Tamtalan,
 But thou's for ever.

Thou paints auld Nature to the aines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream through myrtles twines,
 Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
 Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lasses bleach their clags;
Or stots by hazel chaws and brags,
 Wi' bowthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lay:
 At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel';
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spel.
 O' witchin' love,
That charms that can the wrongen quell,
 The worstest move.

THE

AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION

TO HIS

AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER

THE ACCUSTOMED RIP OF CORN

TO HANSEL

IN THE NEW YEAR.

A GOOD New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a rip to thy auld baggie;
Tho' thou's haw-backit, now, and knaggie,
 I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gaen like any maggie
 Out-owre the lay.

Though now thou's dowie, wiff, and crazy,
And thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dapp't, sleek, and glanzie,
 A bonny gray;
He should been right that deurs't to raise thee,
 Ane in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly, bairdly, steeve, and swank,
And set weel down a thapely shank,
 As e'er weel yird;
And could hae flown out-owre a wank,
 Like onie bird.

It's now some nine-and-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my gude-father's weere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
 And fifty mark;
Though it was ama', 'twas weel-won gear,
 And thou was mark.

When first I gied to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was usen wi' your minnie;
Though ye was trickie, sleek, and fummie,
 Ye ne'er was doolie;
But hamely, sawie, quiet, and cannie,
 And unco soolie.

That day, ye prance'd wi' muckle pride,
 When ye bore hame my bonnie bride;
 And sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
 Wi' maiden air!
 Kyle Stewart I could bragged wide,
 For sic a pair.

Though now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
 And winkle like a meumont-coble,
 That day ye was a jinker noble,
 For heels and win'!
 And ran them till they a' did wobble,
 Far, far behin'.

When thou and I were young and skeigh,
 And saddle-meals at fairs were dreigh,
 How thou wad prance, and merr, and skeigh,
 And tak the road!
 Town's bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
 And ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, and I was mellow,
 We took the road aye like a swallow:
 At Brookes thou had na'er a fellow,
 For pish and speed;
 But ev'ry sail thou pay't them hollow,
 Where'er thou gied.

The sma' droop-crampl'a, hunder caule,
 Might siblin' waur't thee for a bridle;
 But sax Scots-miles thou try't their mauls,
 And gart them whaile;
 Nag whip nor spur, but just a wauls
 O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble Ewie lan',
 As ere in tug or tow was drawn!
 Aft thee and I, in aught hours gaun,
 On gude March weather,
 Hae turn'd sax rood beside our lan',
 For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, and fetcht, and fliskit,
 But thy auld mil thou wad hae whiskit,
 And spread abroad thy weel fill'd brislet,
 Wi' pish and pow'r,
 Till spittie knowes wad rail'd and ricket,
 And steyt owre.

When frosts lay lang, and snaws were deep,
 And threash'd labour back to keep,
 I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
 Aboon the timmer;
 I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
 For that, or summer.

In cart or car thou never restit;
 The wryest bree thou wad hae fac't it:
 Thou never lap, and wau't, and breastit,
 Then stood to blow;
 But just thy step a wee thing haist,
 Thou snaw'd awa.

My Pannan is now thy bairn-dime a':
 Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw:
 Forbye six mair, I've sell'd awa,

That thou hast norn:
 They drew me thirteenth pund and twa,
 The vera warm.

Monie a sair dawk we twa hae wrought,
 And wi' the weary warl' fought!
 And monie an anxious day, I thought
 We wad be beat!
 Yet here to crazy age we've brought,
 Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
 That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
 And thy auld days may end in mervin',
 For my lan' fou,
 A heapit stimpert, I'll reserve and
 Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
 We'll toyt about wi' ane anither;
 Wi' scapie care I'll flin thy ither,
 To some hain'd rig,
 Where ye may nobly tax your leather,
 Wi' sma' fatigue.

ADDRESS

TO

THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'r,
 That led the embattled Scythians to war,
 MILTON.

O Tane! whatever side suit thee,
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
 Wha in yon cavern grim and sootie,
 Close under batches,
 Spairges about the brunnish cootie,
 To stand poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
 And let poor damned bodie be;
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 E'en to a Deil,
 To skelp and stand poor dogs like me,
 And hear us squeal!

Great is thy pow'r, and great thy fame;
 Far kend and noed is thy name:
 And though yon lowin brugh's thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
 And faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate nor tear.

Whyles, ranging like a marin lion,
For prey, a' holes and corners pryin;
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirk;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend GRANNIE say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld-ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' auldritch croon.

When twilight did my GRANNIE summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft 'yeen the dyke she's heard you bummie,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, runnin, through the bonnie's comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

As dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' skelmin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waring sigh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each brist'ld hair stood like a snake,
When wi' an eldritch roar, quick—quick—
Among the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whirling wings.

Let WARLOCKS grim, and wither'd Hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the moors, and dizzy traps,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk yards renew their leagues,
Ower howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil and pain,
May plunge and plunge the kirk in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By winching skill;
And dawa, twal-pint HAWKES'S gaen
As yell's the Bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great show,
On young guidmen fond, keen, and crouse;
When the best work-lame i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a house,
Just at the bit.

When showes dissolve the snawy hoard,
And flow the jinglin icy-board,
Then WATTS-KELPERS haunt the foord,
By your direction,
And 'nightly tra'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

And aft your moon-traversing structures
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleerin, curm, mischievous monkey
Delude his eyes,
Till in some mery drough he tank is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When MASONS' mystic Word and Gair
In morn and tempest raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage mair mop,
Or, wrange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straight to hell!

Lang syne, in EREN'S bonnie yard,
When youthful lovers first were pair'd,
And all the soul of love they thair'd,
The rapur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry sward,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
And play'd on man a curied brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
And gied the infant world a shog,
'Main ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a hizz,
Wi' raskit duds, and recruit gizz,
Ye did present your amonic phiz,
'Mang better folk,
And sklent on the MAX or Ux
Your spivels' joke?

And how ye gat him i' your thrall,
And brak him out o' house and hall,
While acabs and blotches did him gail,
Wi' hinner claw,
And low'd his ill-tongu'd wicked Scawl,
Wae warst ava!

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snarls and fecthin' ferce,
Sin' that day Michael * did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lowlan's tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

And now, auld Cloot, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Rardie's ransie, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll earn a corner jinkin,
And cheat you yet.

But, fare ye weel, auld Nickie-bro!
O wad ye tak a thought and men'!

* See Milton, Book vi.

Ye siblins might—I dinna ken—
 Still has a STRAY—
 I'm wae to think upon you den,
 E'en for your sake!

ADDRESS

OF

BEELZEBUB

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

EARL OF B****,

President of the Right Honourable and Honourable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakespeare, Covent-Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of FIVE HUNDRED HIGHLANDERS, who, as the Society were informed by Mr. M'— of A****, were so sudacious as to attempt an escape from the lawful Lords and Masters, whose property they are, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. Macdonald of Glengary to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—**LIBERTY!***

June 1, anno mundi, 5799.

LONG life, my Lord, and health be yours,
 Unkath'd by hunger'd Highland bores!
 Lord grant, nae doddie, desperate beggar,
 Wi' durr, claymore, or rusty trigger,
 May twin auld Scotland o' a life
 She likes—as BUCHANAN like a KISS!

Faith, you and A****, were right
 To keep the Highland hounds in sight!
 I doubt na they wad bide nae better
 Than let them once out ower the water;
 Then up among thae lakes and seas
 They'll mak what rules and laws they please.
 Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
 May set their Highland blade a-ranklin;
 Some Washington again may head them,
 Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them;
 Till God knows what may be effected,
 When by such heads and hands directed:—
 Poor dunghill sons o' dirt and mire,
 May to Patrician rights aspire!

* This Poem was first published in the Scots Magazine, for February, 1818.

Nae sage North, now, nor sager Sackville,
 To watch and premier owe the pack vile!
 And where will ye get Howe and Clinnam
 To bring them to a right repentance?
 To cower the rebel generation,
 And save the Honour o' the nation!

THEY!—they be d...d! what right has they

To meat, or sleep, or light o' day?—
 Far less to riches, pow'r or freedom,
 But what your Lordships please to gie them!

But hear, my Lord! G**** hear!
 Your HAND'S OWER LIGHT ON THEM, I fear;
 Your factors, grievers, trustees, and bailies,
 I canna say but they do gailies;
 They lay aside a' tender mercies,
 And tie the ballions to the biries;
 Yet, while they're only poin'd and herriet,
 They'll keep their stubborn, Highland spirit.
 But smash them! crush them a' to spail!
 And rot the dyvots i' the jail!
 The young dogs—awings them to the labour—
 Let work and hunger mak them sober!
 The hizzies, if they're oughtin famous,
 Let them in Drury Lane be leenon'd!
 And if the wives and dirty brens
 Come thiggin at your doors and yenns,
 Flaffan wi' duds, and grey wi' hose,
 Frightin awa your ducks and geese—
 Get out a horse-whip, or a jowler—
 The laugest thang, the fiercest growler—
 And gar the tawer'd gypsies pack,
 Wi' a' their bawards on their back!

Go on, my Lord! I lang to meet you,
 And in my HOUSE AT HOME to greet you!
 Wi' common Lords ye shanna mingle,
 The basest neuk beside the ingle,
 At my right-hand assign'd your seat,
 'Tween Herod's hip and Polystrate:—
 Or, if you on your station tarrow,
 Between Almagro and Pizarro;
 A seat, I'm sure ye're wae desertin';
 And till ye come—your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.

ADDRESS

TO

THE TOOTH-ACH.

My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
 That shoots my tortur'd gums along;
 And through my lugs gies mony a twang,
 Wi' gnawing vengeance;
 Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
 Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freens,
Rheumatics gnaw, or sholic squeens;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying meens;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Aye mocks our groans!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
I throw the wee stool o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the gigue heckle,
To see me leap;
While raving mad, I with a beckle
Were in their doup.

O' a' the nam'rous human dools,
Ill harts, daft bargains, Corry-Spoons,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fish o' fools,
Thou bear'st the greet.

Where'er that place be, Friens ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Tooth-ach, surely bear'st the bell
Among them a'!

O thou grim, mischief-making Chief,
That gars the notes of Dispair squeel,
Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a' thoo-thick?—
Gie a' the faces o' Scotland's weal
A towmond's Tooth-ach!

TO

A HAGGIS.

Fair fa' your honest, bonnie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-rice;
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a GRASS
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While though your pores the dew's distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
And cut you up with ready slight,
Trenching your gubing entrails bright
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reckon, rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch and strive,
Dull tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till a' their weel-waul'd kytes be yove,
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maine like to ryve,
Bretnasart hurns.

Is there that o'er his French Ragout,
Or Olio that wad saw a sow,
Or Fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect scorn,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a gude whip lash,
His aiver a mir;
Through bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, HAGGIS-FIN,
The trembling earth reounds his tread;
Clap in his walle nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whistle;
And legs, and arms, and heads will need,
Like taps o' thrills!

Ye Powers, wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland waxes nae thinking ware,
That jumps in luggies;
But, if ye wish her grauds' pray'r,
Gie her a HAGGIS!

TO

A LOUSE.

ON

SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BON-
NET, AT CHURCH.

Ha! whart ye gaun, ye crowsin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye smoot rarely
O'er gauze and lace;
Though, faith, I fear ye dine but sparsely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blawit wunner,
Detested, shunn'd by sauns and sinners,
How dare you set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.

H

Swish, in some beggar's haffet squall;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred jumpin' cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Where Hens or Banns ne'er dare unsuckle
Your thick plantations,

Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fast'ri's, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapout, tow'ring bright
O' Miss's Bonnet!

My woe! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gay as onie groat;
O for some rank, mercer's rose,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flannel toy;
Or siblin some big duddie boy,
On't wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lussanet! fie,
How dare ye do't!

O Jenny, dinna tou your head,
And set your beauties a' ahead!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blawie's makin'
Thae Wines and Frowns-axes, I dread,
Are noice takin'!

O wad some Pow'r the gifte gie us,
To see OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US!
It wad free mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion;
What airs in dress and gait wad lee's us,
And ev'n Devotion!

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK III.

MORAL AND DESCRIPTIVE.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO

ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

I.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected
friend!

No mercenary Bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest mood, a friend's esteem and
praise;

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless
ways;

What Aiken in a cottage would have
been;

Ah! though his worth unknown, far hap-
pier there, I ween.

II.

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The mry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The black'ning ruins o' crams in their
repose;

The milsworn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly mail is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
homeward bend.

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, wacher
through
To meet their Dad, wi' flickerin' noise and
glee.

His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wife's
smile,

The bopng infans prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
And mak him quite forget his labour and
his toil.

IV.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service am among the farmers' ousin';
Some ca' the plough, some herd, some tennis
rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town;

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her
e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to chaw a braw new
gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hard-
ship be.

V.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly
spies:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unsexi'd
flies;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears:
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amain at weel's the
new!
The father mixes a' wi' admonition doct.

VI.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The youngsters a' are warn'd to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk or
play:
And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and
night!
Less in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright!

VII.

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, who kens the meaning o' the rattle,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convey her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her
cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his
name,
While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother heart, it's nae
wild, worthless rake.

VIII.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben:
A strappan youth; he takes the mother's
eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill usen;
The father cracks of horses, ploughs, and
kye.

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi'
joy,
But blase and laithfu', scarce can weel be-
have
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth see backfu' and see
grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her BAAKE's respect-
ed like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond com-
pare!
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage Experience bids me this declare—
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure
spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that seems
the ev'ning gale.

X.

Is there in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling!
smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their
child?
Then points the ruin'd maid, and their dis-
traction wild?

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple
board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's
food:
The soup their only Hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her
cod:
The dame brings forth in complimentary
mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbock,
fill,
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it gude;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' hne was i'
the bell.

XII.

The cheery supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;

The sire worth of'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, since his father's pride;
His bonnet fervently is laid aside,
His lyart hauffs wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion
glide,
He wades a portion with judicious care;
And "Lar us worship God!" he says,
with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their ardent notes in simple
guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
aim:
Perhaps *Demetrius*' wild warbling measures
rise,
Or plaintive *Martyn*, worthy of the
name;
Or noble *Eliza* beats the heav'n-ward
flame,
The sweetest far of *Scots*'s holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are
same;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures
raise;
Nae union ha'e they with our Creator's
praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How *Abram* was the Friend of God on
high;
Or, *Moses* bade eternal warfare wage
With *Amalek*'s ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal bard did grinning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging
ire;
Or, *Job*'s pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or, *Isaiah*'s wild, prophetic fire;
Or, other holy scenes that tune the sacred
lyre.

XV.

Perhaps the Christian volume in due theme,
How guileless blood for guilty man was
shed;
How *He*, who bore in Heaven the second
name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head;
How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts aye they wove so many a
land;
How he, who lone in *Patmos* banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel wand;
And heard great *Babylon*'s doom pro-
nounc'd by Heav'n's command.

XVI.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal
Kiss,
The saint, the father, and the husband
prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant
wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future
days:
There ever bask in uncreased rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an
eternal sphere.

XVII.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's
pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The *Pope*'s incens'd, the *pagan* will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some *Corran* far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the
soul;
And in his *Book* or *Life* the inmates poor
enrol.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their several
way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous
nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the
best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace di-
vine provide.

XIX.

From scenes like these old *Scots*'s grandeur
springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd
abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of Kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of
God!"

* *Pope's Windsor Forest.*



And cerves, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness re-
fin'd!

XX.

O SCOTIA! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
consent!
And, oh! may Heaven their simple lives
prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, how'er Caswars and Comons be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-
lov'd isle.

XXI.

O THOU! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' WALLACE's undaunted
heart;
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, SCOTIA's realm desert:
But still the Patriot, and the Patriot-Bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament
and guard!

WRITTEN IN

FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE,

ON NITH-SIDE.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silted stole,
Grave those counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

As youth and love with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then rapur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, chane,
Evils lurk in felon wait;
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with limner song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of evening close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease.
There ruminatè with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive youngsters round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the headman of Nith-side.

TO

A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON

TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE
PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786.

WAX, molen, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou'st met me in an evil hour;
For I must crush among the moors
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie LARK, companion meet!
Bending thee 'midst the dewy weat!
 Wi' speckled breast,
When upstod-springing, blythe to greet
 The purpling east.

Could blow the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shel'ring woods and wa's mean shield,
But thou, beneath the random field
 O' clod or stone,
Adornst the hieck STRAW-FIELD,
 Unseen, alone.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy answy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lift'st thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
But now the SNAKE upturns thy bod,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet FLOW'ER of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust,
Till aye, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
 Of FROSTY LARK,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to SORROWFUL WORTH is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n,
 To misery's brink,
Till wretch'd of ev'ry may but HEAV'N,
 He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
THAT FATE IS THINE! *—no distant date!

* Predictions of a similar nature occur in many of his Poems and Letters. Indeed he was seldom free from a melancholy presentiment of his hapless fate. Even when his "bubble of fame," as he terms it, "was at the highest, he stood, unmortified, with the intoxicating cup in his hand, looking forward to the time when the blow of calumny would dash it to the ground."

Stern Ruin's FROSTY-SNAKE driv'n, close,
 Full on thy bloom,
Till, crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom!

TO A MOUSE.

ON
TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST
WITH THE FLOUGH.

NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wax, sleekis, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa' see hasty,
 Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
 Wi' murdering PATTLE!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
 Which makes thee shunle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
 And FELLOW-MORTAL!

I doubt na, whyless but thou may stieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A DAIMEN ICHER in a THRAVE
 'Is a sma' request!
I'll get a blessing wi' the laver,
 And never mis't;

Thy wee bit HOUSE, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the windress strewin!
And naething, now, in big a new ane,
 O' faggage green!
And bleak December's winds ensuin,
 Bath snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin fast,
And cou'te here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel COURTES past,
 Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
To chole the winner's sleety dribble,
 And cranreuch cauld!

But, Mòide, thou art no thy lane,
In proving FORTUNE may be vain;
The best laid schemes o' Mice and Men
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' Ma!
The PRESENT only toucheth thee:
But, oh! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects dear!
And forward, though I cannot see,
I Grieve and Fear.

ON SCARING

SOME WATER-POWL

IN LOCH TURBIT,

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS
OF OUCHTERTYRE.

Woe, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunts forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace,
Man, your proud, usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels.
But man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from playing Heaven,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure chain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might,
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow'rs you scorn:
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

ON SEEING

A WOUNDED HARE

LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST
SHOT AT.

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barbarous art,
And blased be thy murder-aiming eye:
May never Fly smother thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter link that of life remains:
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains,
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wound
rest—
No more of rest—but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whirling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nisb, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll mix thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy
helpless fate.

ON HEARING

A THRUSH SING,

IN A

MORNING WALK, JAN. 25, 1793,

THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE AUTHOR.

Sing on, sweet Thrush, upon the leafless
bough;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See aged Winter, 'mid his early reign,
At thy blithe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
 Sit meek Content with light, unanxious
 heart,
 Welcomes the happy moments, bids them
 pass,
 Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day !
 Thou whose bright sun now gilds the orient
 skies !
 Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
 What wealth could never give nor take away !

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care ;
 The mite high Heav'n bestow'd—that mite
 with thee I'll share.

THE HUMBLE PETITION

or

BRUAR WATER *

to

THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

I.

My Lord, I know, your noble ear
 Woe ne'er assaults in vain ;
 Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
 Your humble Slave complain,
 How sunny Phœbus' scorching beams,
 In flaming summer-pride,
 Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
 And drink my crystal side.

II.

The lightly-jumping glowrin' trout,
 That through my waters play,
 If, in their random, wanton spouts
 They near the margin stray ;
 If, hapless chance ! they linger long,
 I'm scorching up to shallow,
 They're left the whitening stams among,
 In gasping death to wallow.

III.

Last day I gat wi' spine and wen,
 As Poon Brown came by,
 That, to a bard I should be seen
 Wi' hail my channel dry :

* Bruar Falls in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful ; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.

A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
 Even as I was he shor'd me ;
 But had I in my glory been,
 He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

IV.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
 In twining wreath I rin ;
 There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
 Wild-roaring o'er a linn ;
 Enjoying large each spring and well
 As nature gave them me,
 I am, although I say't myself,
 Worth gain a mile to see.

V.

Would then my noble master please
 To grant my highest wishes,
 He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
 And bonnie spreading bushes ;
 Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
 You'll wander on my banks,
 And listen many a graceful bird
 Return you thankful thanks.

VI.

The sober larksong, warbling wild,
 Shall to the skies aspire ;
 The gowd-pink, music's paynt child,
 Shall sweetly join the choir ;
 The blackbird among, the linewhit clear,
 The warble mild and mellow ;
 The robin gentle autumn cheer,
 In all her locks of yellow :

VII.

This too, a covert shall ensure,
 To shield them from the storm ;
 And coward mousie sleep secure,
 Low in her grassy form ;
 Here shall the shepherd make his cot,
 To weave his crown of flow'rs ;
 Or find a sheltering safe retreat,
 From pranks descending show'rs.

VIII.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
 Shall meet the loving pair,
 Despising worlds with all their wealth
 As empty, idle care ;
 The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
 The hour of heav'n to grace,
 And birds extend their fragrant arms,
 To screen the dear embrace.

IX.

Here haply too, as vernal dawn,
 Some musing bard may stray,
 And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
 And misty mountain, grey;
 Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
 Mild-chequering through the trees,
 Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
 Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

X.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
 My lowly banks o'erspread,
 And view, deep-pending in the pool,
 Their shadows' wat'ry bed!
 Let fragrant birks in woodbines dress
 My craggy cliffs adorn;
 And, for the lute songster's nest,
 The close embow'ring thorn.

XI.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
 Your little angel band,
 Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
 Their honour'd native land!
 So may through Albion's farthest ken,
 To social-flowing glasses,
 The grace be—"Aithole's honest men,
 And Aithole's bonnie lasses!"

THE

FALL OF FYERS.

WRITTEN WITH

A PENCIL WHILE STANDING

BY IT,

NEAR LOCH-NESS.

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods
 The roaring Fyers pours his many floods;
 Till full he dashes on the rocky meads,
 Where, through a chafelous breach, his stream
 surrounds.

As high in air the burning torrents flow,
 As deep recoiling surges foam below,
 Prone down the rock the whitening sheet
 descends,

And vision echo's ear, astonish'd, rends,
 Dim-seen, through rising mist and careless
 show'rs,

The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'n.
 Still though the gap the wruggling river coils,
 And still below the horrid cædron boils—

SCENERY

OF

BREADALBANE,

WRITTEN

With a Pencil over the Chimney-Piece, in
 the Parlour of the Inn at Kenmore, Tay-
 mouth.

Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
 These northern scenes with weary feet I
 trace;
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
 Th' abodes of cooey'd grouse and timid sheep,
 My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
 Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.—

The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen
 divide,
 The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample
 sides;
 Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong
 the hills,
 The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
 The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
 The palace rising on his verdant side;
 The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native
 tint;
 The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless
 haste;
 The archer arid'g o'er the new-born
 stream;
 The village, glistening in the noon-tide
 beam—

Poetic ardour in my bosom swell,
 Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell;
 The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
 Th' incessant roar of headlong, rumbling
 floods—

Here Poetry might wake her heav'n-taught
 lyre,

And look through nature with creative fire;
 Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil'd,
 Misfortune's lightest'd steps might wander
 wild;

And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to soothe her bitter, rankling
 wounds;

Here heav'n-struck Grief might heav'nward
 upbraid her scan,

And injur'd Worth forgive and pardon man.

ADDRESS

TO

THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON

Crowning his Bust, at Ednam, Roxburgh-
shire, with Bays.

While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tances Eolian strains between:

While Summer with a matron grace
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, soys to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed:

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the Year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast
won;

While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

VERSES

WRITTEN UNDER

THE PORTRAIT OF FERGUSON,
THE POET,

In a Copy of that Author's Works, presented
to a young Lady in Edinburgh, March 19,
1787.

Come on ungrateful man, that can be pleas'd,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure.
O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muse,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the hard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

INSCRIPTION

FOR AN

ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE,

AT

Kerrourghy, the Seat of Mr. Heson; written
in Summer, 1798.

Twice of an independent mind,
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd;
Prepar'd Power's prouddest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

LIBERTY.

A FRAGMENT.

THEE, Caledonia, thy wild beaches among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred
song,

To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace
lies!

Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.—

Is this the power in freedom's war,
That went to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shews immortal here,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
That arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
One quenched in darkness like the sinking
star,
And one the palmed arm of tottering, power-
less age.

SCOTS PROLOGUE.

FOR

MR. SUTHERLAND'S BENEFIT-
NIGHT, DUMFRIES.

Wae'st needs this din about the town o'
Lon'on,
How this new play and that new song is
comin'?

Why is outlandish staff use meikle couried?
Does nonsense mend, like whisky, when im-
ported?

Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame?
For comedy abroad he need na toil,
A fool and knave are plants o' ev'ry soil;
Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece;
There's themes enough in Caledonian story,
Would shew the tragic muse in a' her glory.

Is there nae daring bard will rise, and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless
fell?

Where are the muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;
How here, even here, he first unhatch'd the
sword

'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord;
And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of
ruin?

O for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene,
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!
Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's
arms.

She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman—
A woman, though the phrase may seem un-
civil,
As able and as cruel as the Devil!

One Douglas lives in Home's immortal
page,

But Douglases were heroes every age;
And though your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas follow'd to the martial strife,
Perhaps, if bows bow right, and Right suc-
ceeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land
Would take the muses' servants by the hand;
Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them;
And where ye justly can commend, com-
mend them;

And sibbins when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard and say, The folks hae done their
best!—

Would a' the land do this, then I'll be
caution,

Ye'll soon hae Poets o' the Scottish nation,
Will gar Fame blow until her trumpet crack,
And warble Time and lay him on his back!

For us and for our stage should any spier,
"Whose nightgowne child maks a' this bustle
here?"

My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
We have the honour to belong to you!
We're your ain bairns, c'en guide us as ye
like,

But like good withers, shure before ye strike;
And grunts! will I hope ye'll ever find us,
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
We've got frae a' professions, sets and ranks:
God help us! we're but poor—ye've got but
thanks.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN

AT THE THEATRE, ELLISLAND,

ON

NEW-YEAR'S-DAY EVENING.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great
city

That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the
pity!

Though, by the bye, abroad why will you
roam?

Good sense and taste are natives here at
home.

But not for panegyric I appear,
I come to wish you all a good new year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story:
The sage, grave ancient cough'd, and bade me
say,

"You're one year older this important day,"
If Winaa roo—he hinted some suggestion,
But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the
question;

And with a would-be-roguish leer and wink,
He bade me on you press this one word—
"THINK!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush with hope
and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of
merit,

To you the doxard has a deal to say,
In his dry, dry, sententious, proverb way!
He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless
rattle,

That the first blow is ever half the battle;
That though some by the skirt may try to
smack him;

Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, though not least in love, ye youthful fair,
 Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
 To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,
 And humbly begs you'll mind the important—
 —now!
 To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
 And offers him to give and to receive.

For our sincere, though highly weak en-
 deavourers,
 With grateful pride we own your many fa-
 vours;
 And howe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
 Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

ADDRESS.

SPOKEN

BY MISS FONTENELLE,

On her Benefit-Night, December 4, 1795,
 at the Theatre, Dumfries.

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,
 And not less anxious, sure, this night, than
 ever,
 A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such manner,
 'Twould ramp my bill, said I, if nothing
 better;
 So, sought a Poet, rooted near the skies,
 Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;
 Said, nothing like his works was ever printed;
 And last, my Prologist-business dily hinted.

"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man
 of rhymes,
 "I know your bent—these are no laughing
 times;
 Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears,
 Dissolve in passion—and sentimental tears—
 With laden sight, and solemn-rounded sen-
 tence,
 Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Re-
 pentance;
 Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,
 Waving on high the desolating brand,
 Calling the norms to bear him o'er a guilty
 land?"

I could no more—askance the creature
 eyeing,
 Dye think, said I, this face was made for
 crying?
 I'll laugh, that's pox—nay more, the world
 shall know it;
 And so, your servant! gloomy Maure Faust!

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fixed belief,
 That Misery's another word for Grief;
 I also think—so may I be a bride!
 That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Then man of crazy care and restless sigh,
 Still under bleak Misfortune's blinding eye;
 Doom'd to that woe's task of man alive—
 To make three paines do the work of five;
 Laugh in Misfortune's face—the boldman
 wench!
 Say, you'll be merry, though you can't be
 rich.

Then other man of care, the wretch in
 love,
 Who long with jilish arts and airs has
 strove;
 Who at the boughs all temptingly project,
 Messur's in desperate thought—a rope—thy
 neck;
 Or, where the bounding cliff o'erhangs the
 deep,
 Peered to meditate the healing leap;
 Would'st thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping
 elf?
 Laugh at her follies—laugh o'en at thyself;
 Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
 And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
 And as we're merry, may we still be wise!

THE

RIGHTS OF WOMAN:

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS,

SPOKEN

BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER
 BENEFIT-NIGHT.

While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty
 things,
 The fate of empires, and the fall of kings;
 While quacks of state must each produce his
 plan,
 And even children lip the Rights of Man;
 Amid this mighty fun, just let me mention,
 The Rights of Woman merit some at-
 tention.

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connection,
 One sacred Right of Woman is Protection.
 The tender flower that lifts its head, close,
 Helpless, must fall before the blast of fate,

Sunk on the earth, defac'd its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending
morn.—

Our second Right—but needless here is
caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion,
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong in 'his Decorum.
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough, rude men had naughty
ways;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a
riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet—
Now, thank our men! these Gothic times are
 fled;
Now, well-bred men—and you are all well-
bred—
Most gently think (and we are much the
gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor man-
ners.

For Right the third, our last, our best, our
dearest,
That right to flustering, female hearts the
marts,
Which even the Rights of Kings in low pro-
stration
Must hombly own—'tis dear, dear ADAMI-
TION!
In that bliss sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.—
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, elevations,
airs,
'Gainst such an host what flimsy savage
darts?
When awful Beauty joins with all her
charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with con-
stitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
And call her! the Majesty of Woman!

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN

BY MR. WOODS, ON HIS BENE-
FIT-NIGHT.

Monday, 16th April, 1787.

WARM by a gen'rous Public's kind acclaim,
That dearest meed is granted—honour'd fame;

When HARK your favour is the Actor's lot,
Nor even the MAN in PRIVATE LIFE forgot;
What breast so dead to heavenly Virtue's
glow,
But heaven's impression'd with the grateful
throb?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous
throng,
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's
song;
But here an ancient nation fam'd afar,
For genius, learning high, as great in war—
Hail, CALDONIA! name for ever dear!
Before whose son I'm honour'd to appear!
Where every science—every nobler art—
That can inform the mind, or mend the
heart,
Is known; as grateful nations oft have found
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
Philosophy, no idle, pedant dream,
Here holds her search by heav'n-taught Rea-
son's beam;
Here History paints, with elegance and force,
The side of Empire's flourishing course;
Here Douglas forms wild Shakspeare into
plan,
And Harley* rears all the god in man.
When well-form'd ease, and sparkling wit
unite,
With manly lore or female beauty bright,
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace,
Can only charm us in the second place.)
Witness, my heart, how oft, with panting
fear,
As on this night, I've met these judges
here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live,
Equal to judge—you're candor to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With decency and law beneath his feet;
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
Like CALDONIA, you applaud or blame.

O Thou! dread Power! whose empire-
giving hand
Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honour'd
land!
Strong may she glow with all her ancient
fire;
May every son be worthy of his sire;
Firm may she rise with generous disdain
At Tyranny's, or direst Pleasure's chain;
Still self-dependant in her native shore,
Bold may the brave grim Danger's louden
roar,
Till Fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no
more.

* The Man of Feeling, written by Mr.
McKenzie.

ADDRESS

TO

EDINBURGH.

I.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and towers,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet
 Sat legislation's sovereign pow'rs!
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
 I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

II.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
 As busy trade his labours plies;
 There architecture's noble pride
 Bids elegance and splendour rise;
 Here justice, from her native skies,
 High wields her balance and her rod;
 There learning, with his eagle eyes,
 Speaks science in her coy abode.

III.

Thy Sons, Edina, social, kind,
 With open arms the stranger hail;
 Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
 Above the narrow, rural vale;
 Anentive will to sorrow's wail,
 Or modest merit's silent claim;
 And never may their sources fail!
 And never envy blot their name!

IV.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn!
 Gay as the glided summer sky,
 Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
 Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!

Fair Burnes strikes th' adoring eye,
 Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine;
 I see the *Sun* or *Lark* on *Hinn*,
 And own his work indeed divine!

V.

There, watching high the least alarms,
 Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
 Like some bold vet'ran, grey in arms,
 And mark'd with many a scamy scar:
 The pond'rous wall and many bar,
 Grim-riding o'er the rugged rock;
 Have oft withstood assailing war,
 And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

VI.

With awe-struck thought, and pining tears,
 I view that noble, stately dome,
 Where Scotia's kings of other years,
 Fam'd heroes! had their royal home:
 Alas! how chang'd the times to come!
 Their royal name low in the dust!
 Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
 Though rigid law cries out, 'tis just!

VII.

Wild beart my heart to trace your steps,
 Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
 Though hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
 Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
 Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
 Haply My SONS have left their shed,
 And fac'd grim danger's headest roar,
 Bold-following where Your fathers led!

VIII.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and towers,
 Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
 Sat legislation's sovereign pow'rs!
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
 I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK IV.

EJULATIONS AND ELEGIES.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

I.

WHEN chill November's early blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man, whose aged map
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

II.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
Began the ret'read sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast begun
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man!

III.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;
I've seen you weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proof,
That man was made to mourn.

IV.

O mast! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mispending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

V.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might:
Man then is useful to his kind,
Sorrowless is his right;
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and woe, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

VI.

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap caress'd;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in ev'ry land,
Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

VII.

Many and sharp the numerous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!

And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII.

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly Fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

IX.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wight
E'er plac'd in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

X.

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the Last!
The poor, oppress'd, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

XI.

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kind and the true!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, Oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!

DESPONDENCY.

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I sit me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!

Dim backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

II.

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
E'en when the wished End's deny'd,
Yet while the busy Means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfed with an Awe,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same,
You, bustling, and jostling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

III.

How blest the Solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgiving, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with angling toils,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thoughts,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint-collected dream:
While prizing, and rindog
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

IV.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art;
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The Solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he needs not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here muse ere here,
At perfidy ingrate!

V.

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,

To care, to guilt unknown ;
 How ill exchang'd for riper times,
 To feel the follies, or the crimes,
 Of others, or my own !
 Ye tiny elves that guileless sport,
 Like linnets in the bush,
 Ye little know the ill ye court,
 When manhood is your wish !
 The losses, the crosses,
 That active Man engage !
 The fears all, the tears all,
 Of dim-declining Age !

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm !
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, de-
 fend you
 From seasons such as these ?

SHAKESPEARE.

When biting BOREAS, fell and dense,
 Sharp shivers through the leafless bow'r ;
 When FROSTUS gives short-liv'd glow'r
 Far south the lift,
 Dim-dark'ning through the flaky show'r,
 Or whirling drift ;

As night the storm the steeples rock'd,
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
 While burns, wi' anawy wreaths up-chok'd,
 Wild eddying swirl,
 Or through the mining outlet back'd,
 Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doores and winnocks rattle,
 I thought me on the curie castle,
 Or silly sheep who bide this brattle
 O' winter war,
 And through the drift, deep-fairing sprattle,
 Beneath a star.

Ilk happy bird, wee, helpless thing,
 That, in the merry months o' spring,
 Delighted me to hear thee sing,
 What comes o' thee ?
 Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing,
 And close thy e'e ?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toild,
 Lame from your savage homes exil'd,
 The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote
 spoil'd,
 My heart forgets,
 While pillow the tempest wild
 Sore on you beats.

Now FUGIO, in her midnight reign,
 Dark muffled, view'd the dreary plain ;
 Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
 Rose in my soul,
 When on my ear this plaintive strain,
 Slow, solemn, sole—

" Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust !
 And freeze, thou biter-biding frost !
 Descend ye chillily, smothering snows !
 Not all your rage, as now united, shows
 More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
 Vengeful malice unrepenting,
 Than heav'n-illum'd man on brother man
 bestows !

" See stern oppression's iron grip,
 Or mad ambition's gory hand,
 Sending, like blood-thounds from the slip
 War, want, and murder o'er a land !
 Ev'n in the peaceful, rural vale,
 Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
 How pamper'd luxury, flau'ry by her side,
 The parasite companions her ear,
 With all the servile wretches in the rear,
 Looks o'er proud property, extended wide ;
 And eyes the simple rustic hind,
 Whose toil upholds the glim'ring show,
 A creature of another kind,
 Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
 Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile
 below !

" Where, where is love's fond, tender throne,
 With lordly honour's lofty brow,
 The power's you proudly own ?
 Is there, beneath love's noble name,
 Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
 To bless himself alone !
 Mark maiden-innocence a prey
 To love-presending snares,
 This hoard honour turns away,
 Shunning soft play's rising way,
 Regardless of the tears, and unavailing
 pray'r !—
 Perhaps, this hour, in misty's squalid nest,
 She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
 And with a mother's fears shrinks at the
 rocking blast !

" Oh ye ! who sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
 Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown !
 Ill-unlucky keen nature's clam'rous call,
 Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to
 sleep,
 While, through the ragged roof and chinky
 wall,
 Chill o'er his slumberi' piles the drifty
 heap !—

" Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pinch
Guilt, erring man, releasing view !
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow ?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the
bliss !"

I heard the mair, for CRANTICLERS
Shook off the poultry snow,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing crew.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Through all his works abroad,
The heart, benevolent and kind,
The most resembles God.

WINTER.

A DIRGE.

I.

THE win'try west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blow ;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snow ;
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes
down,
And roars frae bank to brae ;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

II.

" The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May ;
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join ;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fair resembles mine !

III.

THOU Fow's SCREAMER, whose mighty
scheme
These woe of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be bent,
Because they are Thy Will !
Then all I want (Oh ! do thou grant
This one request of mine !)
Since to Enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to Resist.

* Dr. Young.

TO RUIN.

AN ODE.

I.

ALL hail ! inexorable lord !
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall !
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all !
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart ;
For one has cut my ANAXAR TIE,
And quivers in my heart.
Then how'ring, and pouring,
The Stream no more I dread ;
Though thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou, grim Fow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a Pleasure can afford,
Oh ! hear a wretch's pray'r !
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid ;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care !
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day ;
My weary heart in throbbings cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay ?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face ;
Enclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace !

A PRAYER

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear !
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear !

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun ;
As SOMNAMBULOUS, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrances I have done ;

Thou know'st that thou hast formed me
With passions wild and wrong ;
And list'ning to their whispering voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human WEAKNESS has come short,
 Or FRAILTY kept aside,
 Do thou, ALL-GOOD! for such thou art,
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with INTENTION I have err'd,
 No other plea I have,
 But, THOU ART GOOD; and Goodness will
 Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

I.

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
 Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
 Some drops of joy with draughts of ill be-
 tween;
 Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing
 storms:
 Is it departing pains my soul alarms?
 Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark shade?
 For guilt, for guile, my terrors are in arms;
 I tremble to approach an angry God,
 And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging
 rod.

II.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul of-
 fence!"
 Fain promise never more to disobey;
 But, should my Author health again dispense,
 Again I might desert fair Virtue's way;
 Again in Folly's path might go away;
 Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
 Then how should I for heav'nly mercy pray,
 Who act so counter heav'nly mercy's plan?
 Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet in tempta-
 tion ran?

III.

O Thou, great Governor of all below!
 If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
 Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
 Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
 With that controlling pow'r unite ev'n me,
 Those headlong furious passions to con-
 fine;
 For all anks I feel my powers to be,
 To rule their currents in th' allowed line;
 Oh! aid me with thy help, OMNIPOTENCE
 DIVINE!

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE

PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
 Surpasses me to know;
 Yet sure I am, that known to thee
 Are all thy works below.

Thy treasure here before thee stands,
 All wretched and discent;
 Yet sure those ill, that wring my soul
 Obey thy high behest.

Sure thou, Almighty, canst not act
 From cruelty or wrath!
 O, free my weary eyes from tears,
 Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
 To suit some wise design;
 Then man my soul with firm resolves
 To bear and not repine!

THE

FIRST PSALM.

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,
 Hath happiness in store,
 Who walks not in the wicked's way,
 Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
 Casts forth his eyes abroad,
 But with humility and awe
 Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the tree
 Which by the streams grows;
 The fruitful top is spread on high,
 And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guile
 Shall to the ground be cast,
 And, like the rootless stubble, rot
 Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore
 Hath giv'n them peace and rest;
 But hath decreed that wicked men
 Shall ne'er be truly blest.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES:

OF

THE NINETIETH PSALM.

O Thou, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains bear'd their heads
Beneath thy forming hand,
Before this pond'rous globe itself,
Arose at thy command;

Thou Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time,
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight,
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought:
Again thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down in blossom,
All wither'd and decay'd.

GRACE

BEFORE MEAT.

O Thou, who kindly dost provide,
For every creature's want!
We bless thee, God of Nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent:

And if it please thee, Heavenly Guide,
May never worm be sent;
But whether granted, or denied,
Lord, bless us with content!

AMEN!

VERSES

LEFT, BY THE AUTHOR,

At a Reverend Friend's House, in the Room
where he slept.

O Thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above!
I know thou wilt me hear,
When for this scene of peace and love,
I make my pray'r sincere.

The heavy siren—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleas'd to spare!
To bless his little filial flock,
And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush;
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous, scrupulous hand,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the stains on ev'ry hand,
Guide thou their steps away!

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in Heav'n!

ON THE BIRTH

OF A

POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

Born in peculiar Circumstances of Family
Disaster.

Swart Flow'ers, pledge o' meek love,
And ward o' many a pray'r,
What heart o' stone wad thou no more,
See helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirtles o'er the lee,
Chill, on thy lovely form;
And gaze, alas! the shivering tree,
Should shield thee free the norm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blow,
Protect thee from the driving show'r,
The bliter frost and snow!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various wounds,
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn:
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

ON READING,

IN A NEWSPAPER, THE DEATH OF

JOHN M'LEOD, Esq.

Brother to a young Lady, a particular
Friend of the Author's.

Saw thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms;
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly decks with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest string:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrong.

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
Can heal the wound he gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

ELEGY

ON

MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO.

Life ne'er exalted in so rich a prize,
As Burnet, lovely, from her native skies;
Nor anxious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I
forget?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set!
In thee, high Heaven above was truth
shown,
As by his noblest work the Godhead best is
known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye
groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery
shore,
Ye woodland choir that chant your idle
loves,
Ye cease to charm—Eliza is no more!

Ye heathy wastes, immix'd with reedy fens;
Ye mossy streams, with sedge and rushes
stor'd;
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly, ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumb'rous pride was all their
worth,

Shall vent'ur' lay their pompous exit hail?
And thou, sweet excellence! forsake our
earth,
And not a muse in honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's
pride,
And virtue's light, that beams beyond the
spheres;
But like the sun eclips'd at morning tide,
Thou left'st us darkling in a world of
tears.

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and
care;
So decks the woodbine sweet yon aged tree,
So from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and
bare.

THE LAMENT.

OCCASIONED BY

THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF
A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet Attraction prove the spring of
woe!

Howe.

I.

O Thou pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that jolly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep.
How Life and Love are all a dream.

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-fraught poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quains and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft assumed pow'r's above;
The promis'd father's tender name—
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arm,
How have the rapid moments flown!
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and her's alone!
And must I think it? is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does the heedless hour my groan
And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

Oh! can she bear to bare a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie through rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us pass,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-dream'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Er'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a Wisp to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a thro',
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I uy,
Sore-harrow'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, thief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway,
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Obscr'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in wrong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never to return!
Scenes, if in sleep I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!

From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander through;
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

LAMENT

OF

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.

ON THE

APPROACH OF SPRING.

I.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal stream,
And glads the aspen's skin;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

II.

Now lark-locks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis mild wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest;
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall oppress.

III.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the daisy:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rave their sweets among;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Mean lie in prison strong.

IV.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I has been;
For lightly rose I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sovereign of Scotland,
And many a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

V.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my foe,
Grim vengeance yet, shall whet a sword
That through thy soul shall go:
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that drops on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying eye.

VI.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's face,
Or turn their hearts to thee;
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

VII.

Oh! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the summer winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

LAMENT

FOR

JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

I.

The wind blew hallow frae the hills,
By fax the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Luger's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a Band,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all suddenly slain.

II.

He leen'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with
years;
His locks were bleached white wi' time!
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!

And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting through their caves,
To echo bore the notes along.

III.

" Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques of the vernal choir !
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year !
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and eye ;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

IV.

" I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain ;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane :
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae summer sun exalt my bloom ;
But I mean lie before the storm,
And then plant them in my room.

V.

" I've seen the many changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown ;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown :
Unheard, ungit, unreliev'd,
I bear alone my load o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

VI.

" And last (the sum of a' my griefs !)
My noble master lies in clay ;
The flow'r among our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay :
In weary being now I gine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

VII.

" Awake thy last sad voice, my harp !
The voice of woe and wild despair !
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermaist !
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
Thou silent an' unsightly tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought'st from fortune's micken
gloom.

VIII.

" In poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mist, obscure, involv'd me round ;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
No ray of fame was to be found ;
Thou foun'd'st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air ;
The friendless Bard and rustic song,
Became alike thy lowering care.

IX.

" Oh ! why has worth so short a date ?
While villains ripen grey with time !
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime !
Why did I live to see that day ?
A day to me so full of woe !
Oh ! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low !

X.

" The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been :
The mother may forget the child
That smiles so sweetly on her knee ;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me !"

ON

THE DEATH

OF

SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

Ten hump of day, with ill-pressaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath the western
wave ;
Th' inconsumt blast howl'd through the
dark'ning air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave :

Loose as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the lov'd haunts* of Scotia's royal
train ;
Or mov'd where limpid streams, once hal-
low'd well,†
Or mould'ring ruins mark the sacred fane : ‡

* The King's Park, at Holyrood House.

† St. Anthony's Well.

‡ St. Anthony's Chapel.

Th' increasing blast rear'd round the beeching
rocks;
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the
sunny sky;
The groaning trees untimely shed their
locks;
And shooting meteors caught the startled
eye:

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclos'd a stately Form,
In weeds of woe that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raging
storm:

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd:
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued:

Revers'd that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclin'd that banner, erst in fields unpar'd,
That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
And brav'd the mighty monarchs of the
world:—

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried;
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd
to save!
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest
pride!

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The drooping arms surround their parent's
bier,
And grateful science heaves the heart-felt
sigh:

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow;
But, ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless Fate has laid this guardian low:

"My patriot falls, but shall be lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless
name!
No; every Muse shall join her tuneful
tongue,
And future ages bear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Thro' future times to make his virtues last,
That distant years may boast of other
Blairs!"—
She said, and vanish'd with the sweeping
blast.

ON

THE DEATH

OF

ROBERT RIDDEL, ESQ.

OF GLENKIDDEL,

April, 1794.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
Nor pour your decant, grating, on my
soul:
Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy ver-
dant stole,
More welcome were to me grim Winter's
wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flow'rs, with all your
dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my
friend:
How can I to the tuneful song attend?
That strain flows round th' untimely tomb
where Riddel lies.

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of
woe,
And sooth the Viarvas weeping on this
bier:
THE MAN OF WORTH, who has not left
his peer,
Is in his "narrow house," for ever darkly
low.

There, Spring, again with joy shall others
greet:
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

LAMENT

WRITTEN WHEN THE

AUTHOR WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE
HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.

O'er the min-shrouded cliffs of the lone
mountain straying,
Where the wild winds of winter incre-
dibly rave,
What woe's wring my heart while intently
surveying
The storm's gloomy path on the breast of
the wave.

Ye foam-crowned billows, allow me to wail,
Ere ye toss me afar from my lov'd native
shore;

Where the flower which bloom'd sweetest in
Corla's green vale,

The pride of my bosom, my Mary's no
more.

No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll
wander,

And smile at the moon's rippled face in
the wave;

No more shall my arms cling with fondness
around her,

For the dew-drops of morning fall cold on
her grave.

No more shall the soft thrill of love warm
my breast,

I haunt with the storm ed a far distant
shore;

Where, unknown, unlamented, my ashes
shall rest,

And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.

ELEGY

ON CAPT. M. HENDERSON,

A GENTLEMAN

Who held the Parent for his Honours im-
mediately from Almighty God!

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, beam'ly light!

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haur'd thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurchieon hides,
And like stock fish come o'er his smiddie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's free us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, play arrays forlorn,
Free man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neighbors o' the storm,
That proudly took your cresting cairns!

Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing years,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, like grove the cushat kens!
Ye hazelly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
Wi' toddlin din,
Or foaming string, wi' hasty scum,
Free lin to lin.

Mourn little harebells o'er the lee;
Ye mussy foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodhines hanging bonnie,
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n, when beams their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye mackies whiddin through the glads,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crop the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling through a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirling pairick brood;
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled uals,
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring crabs at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Free our child thote,
Tell thee far worlds, who lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houseless, free your fry bow'r,
In some auld tree, or clarkish tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silens glow'r,
Sets up her horn,
Wall through the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my cavity strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe;
And free my ran the dragging reins
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, spring, thou darling of the year!
 Ilk cowslip cup shall keep a tear;
 Thou, summer, while each corny spear
 Shoots up its head,
 Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear,
 For him that's dead!

Thou autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
 In grief thy yellow mantle wear!
 Thou, winter, hurdling through the air
 The roaring blaw,
 Wide o'er the naked world declare
 The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
 Mourn, empress of the silent night!
 And you, ye twinkling stars bright,
 My Matthew mourn!
 For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
 Ne'er to return.

O HENDERSON! the man! the brother!
 And art thou gone, and gone for ever!
 And hast thou cross that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound!
 Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around!

Go to your sculptor'd tomb, ye Great,
 In a' the din'd trash o' state;
 But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
 Thou man of worth;
 And weep the an' bonn fellow's fate
 E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

Sore, passenger! my story's brief;
 And truth I shall relate, man;
 I tell nae common tale o' grief,
 For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
 Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man;
 A look of pity hither cast,
 For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble soldier art,
 That pass'd by this grave, man,
 There moulders here a gallant heart;
 For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
 Canst throw uncommon light, man;
 Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
 For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
 Wad life itself resign, man;
 Thy sympathetic ear moun fa',
 For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art mounch without a stain,
 Like the unchanging blue, man;
 This was a kinsman o' thy ale,
 For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
 And ne'er good wine did fear, man;
 This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
 For Matthew was a queer man.

If any whiggish whingin sot,
 To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
 May dool and sorrow be his lot,
 For Matthew was a rare man.

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*

An honest man's the noblest work of God.
 For.

HAS tald E seen the Deil?
 Or great Mackinlay † thrawn his heel?
 Or Russell? again grown weel,
 To preach and read?
 "Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

Kilmarnock lang may grant and grane,
 And aigh, and sab, and greet her lane,
 And cleed her hair, man, wife, and wean,
 In mourning weed;
 To death she's dearly paid the kane,
 Tam Samson's dead!

The brethern of the mystic Lave
 May hing their head in woeful weel,
 While by their nose the tears will revel,
 Like any bead;
 Death's gien the lodge an unco deuil,
 Tam Samson's dead!

When winter moffles up his cloak,
 And binds the mirk like a rock;

* When this worthy old sportsman woot
 out last mairfowl season, he exposted it was
 to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his
 fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die
 and be buried in the mine. On this hint
 the Author composed his Elegy and Epitaph.

† A certain preacher, a great favourite with
 the million. See the Ordination, stanza 11.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite
 with the few, who was at that time ailing.
 For him, see also the Ordination, stanza 21.

When to the loughs the durlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the Coak?
Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jamo, roar
In time of need;
But now he lags on death's How-scores,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now left the stately monument still,
And crans bedropp'd wi' crimson bill,
And eels weel kenn'd for soughs tail,
And gels for greed,
Since dark in death's Frow-canal we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring pairicks a';
Ye cooie moderocks, crounsly caw;
Ye maunkies, cock your fud fa' brow,
Withooten dread;
Your mortal fee is now awa',
Tam Samson's dead!

That waefu' morn he ever mourn'd,
Saw him in shoonin' graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, oh! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body banners;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns came down like waters,
An acre bruid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin', clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Ower many a weary hag he limpet,
And aye the ticher that he thumpet,
Till coward death behind him jumpet
Wi' deadly feids;
Now he proclaims, wi'oot o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bauld-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd hand;
"L...d, fye!" he cry'd, and owre did
stagger,
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth beween'd a father;
Yon auld gray name, among the heather,
Marka out his head,
Where Burns has wroon, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast,
Some spicifu' moorfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch and breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry rave
O' pouter and lead,
Till Echo answer frae her cave,
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his soul, where'er he be!
In the wish o' many mae than me;
He had twa faults, or may be three,
Yet what remind!
As social, honest man want we;
Tam Samson's dead!

THE EPITAPH.

TAM SAMSON'S weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye cannie zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rises,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him!

PER CONTRA.

Go, FAME, and cancer like a filly
Through a' the streets and meads o' KILBR,*
Tell every honest, social billie
To cease his grievin',
For yet unkaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin'!

ELEGY

ON THE YEAR 1788.

For lords or kings I durna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they're born;
But, oh! prodigious to reflect!
A Townsman, Sir, is gane to wreck!
O Emort-ment, in thy sma' space
What dire events ha'e taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast left us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

* KILBR is a phrase the country-folks some-
times use for Kilmarnock.

The Spanish empire's tinct a head,
And my auld toothless Bawtie's dead;

The tulzie's air 'tween Fin and Fox,
And 'tween our Maggie's twa wee cocks;
The tane is game, a bloody devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil;
The tither's something dour o' treadin',
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden.

Ye ministers, come mount the poupit,
And cry till ye be hairs and roupet,
For Enoch-aroe he wish'd you weel,
And gied you a' haith gear and meal;
E'en mony a plock, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursel's, for little feck!

Ye bonnie lasses, dight your een,
For some o' you ha'e tane a frien';

In Enoch-aroe, ye ken, was men
Wha ye'll ne'er hae to gie again.

Observe the very nowt and sheep,
How dowl and daveily they creep,
Nay, even the yirth insel does cry;
For E'nbrugh wells are gressen dry.

O EIGHTY-NINE, thou'st but a hair,
And no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou heedless boy, I pray tak care,
Thou now han got thy Daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, muzzl'd, hap-shackl'd RE-
GENT,
But, like himsel, a fall free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae wear than he did, honest man;
As muckle better as you can.

JAN. 1, 1789.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK V.

EPISTLES.

TO

JAMES SMITH.

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much.....

BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the sloven, peevish thief,
That e'er attempted wealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-broef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your art.

For me, I swear by sun and moon,
And ev'ry star that blinkt aboon,
Ye've cost me twinty pair o' shoon
Just goun to see you;
And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair than I'm wi' you.

That sild capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit nature,
She's turn'd you a', a human creature
On her Fates plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature,
She's wrocht, the MAN.

Just now I've seen the fa o' rhyme,
My barmie noodle's working prime,

My fancie yerkit up sublime
Wi' hazy summon;
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme, a neighbor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the countrie clash,
And raise a din;
For me, an Airm I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has laid me the ruinet coat,
And damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
O' countrie wit.

This while my notion's turnt a skient,
To try my fate in gild black Fancie;
But till the snar I'm thus way bent,
Something cries, "Hoodie!"
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Gaeze, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors,
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless teners,
Their unknown payers."

Then farewell hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brow!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whirling thrang,
And teach the lonesome heights and howers
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with restless head
How never-fading moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with the inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound and hale;
Then top and main-top crowd the sail,
Heave CAKE o'er side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, as far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted, fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Mak's hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fa' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For, once that five-an'-forty's speid,
See crazy, weary, joyless cild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Come hooin', hirlin' ower the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When once LIFE'S DAY draws near the
gloamin',
Then farewell vacant careless roamin':
And farewell cheerfu' tankards foamin',
And social noisay;
And farewell, dear deluding WOMAN,
The joy o' joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scornin',
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warnin',
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And though the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor toot;
They drink the sweet, and eat the fat,
But care or pain:
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some fortune chase;
Keen Hope does every sinew brace:
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey;
Then cannon, in some cozie place,
They close the DAY.

And others, like poor humble servan',
Poor wighs! nar rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, signal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
Till curst with age, obscure, and starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil and straining—
But trace with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle LUNA waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath whose light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Pow'rs!" and warm im-
plore,
"Though I should wander TERRA o'er,
In all her climates,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth o' rhymes."

"Gie dreepin' roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hang frae their beards;
Gie fine brow claes to fine life-guards,
And maids o' honour;
And yill and whiskey gie to calds,
Until they scunner."

"A tide, DEMETER metes it;
A GAMER gie to WILLIE PITT;
Gie wealth to some be-lodger'd cith,
In cent, per cent.
But give me real, sterling wh,.
And I'm content."

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't WATER-BROSE, or MUSEIN-RAIL,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the Muse dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behind my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blow;
An weel I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye dooce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tidless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In ANON trills and graces

Ye never stray,
But GRAVITAS, solemn basses
Ye ham away.

Ye are the GRAVE, nae doubt ye're WISE;
Nae ferly though ye do despise
The hairum-scurum, rum-stam boys,
The rutilin squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

Whist! I—but I shall band me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, JAMIE, I shall say nae mair,
But quit my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Where'er I gang.

TO

JOHN LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

APRIL 1, 1785.

Wells briars and woodbines budding green,
And pairicks scratchin loud at e'en,
And morning poussie whiddin soon,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frim'
I pray excuse.

On FANNY-e'en we had a rockin,
To ca' the crack and weave our sockin
And there was muckle fun and jokin,
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a heavy yokin
At SANG ABOUT.

There was ae SANG* among the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had address
To some sweet wife;
It thir'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd as weel,
Wha gen'rous manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be POPE, or SHELLEY,
Or SCOTTIE's work?"
They said me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

* SEE APPENDIX.

It gat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And ae about him there I pier't;
Then a' that ken't him round declar'd
He had INCENSE,
That name excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was the fine.

That set him to a pint of ale,
And either doct or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sanghe'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, and swoor an aith,
Though I should pawn my plough and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint and gill I'd gie them haith
To hear your crack.

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
Amazin as soon as I could spell,
I to the CAAMAC-STONK fell,
Though rude and rough,
Yet crossing to a body's sel,
Does weel enough.

I am nae POET, in a sense,
But jow a RHYMER, like, by chance,
And hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Where'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly VASSIE FRAS FANNIE,
To mak a SANG?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and nook;
If honest Nature made you FOOLS,
What mair your grammar?
Ye'd better taen up spades and shooil,
Or knapping-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited lasses,
Confuse their brains in college classes,
They gae us airs, and come out ains,
Plain trash to speak;
And syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub and mire,
At plough or cart,
My Muse, though hamely be airtie,
May touch the heart.

K

O for a spark o' Allan's glee,
Or Ferguson's, the bauld and chee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it;
That would be leas enough for me,
If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Though real friends, I believe, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fae,
I've no imaim,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about myself;
As ill I like my faults to sell;
But friends, and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Though I mean owm, as monie still
As sair abuse me.

There's ae wua FAIR they whyles lay to me,
I like the lause—Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
As dance or fair;
Maybe some truss TINK they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We've gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgether,
And hae a swop o' RHYMING-WARE
Wi' aae anither.

The four-gill chap, we've gar him clauter,
And kisser him wi' reekin water;
Synce we'll sit down and tak our whinner,
To cheer our heart:
And faith, we've be acquainted better
Before we part.

* There's naething like the honest nappy!
Whar'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
Or women comely, safe, and sappy,
'Tween morn and morn,
As them who like to tase the drappie
In glass or horn?

I've seen me daer's upon a time;
I scarce could wink or see a syme;
Just as bauf matchkin does me prize,
Ought less is heile,
Then back I rattle on the rhyme
As plig's a whinle!

Awa, ye selfish, warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, and grace,

* This and the following stanza were represented by Dr. Currie.

Ev'n love and friendship, should give place
To catch THE PLACK!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your hands on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowel, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle;
Two lines frae you wad gar me fiddle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

TO

JOHN LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

APRIL 31, 1793.

While new-ca'd kye rowt at the risk,
And pownies reek in plough or brail,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind lause.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
Raukin the corn out-o'er the rigs,
Or dealing through among the waigs
Their ten-hours hie,
My awkward Muse sair pleads and begs,
I would na wrise.

The tapless, ramfrees'd blazie,
She's saft as baw, and something lazy,
Quo' she, "Ye ken, we've been sae busy,
This month and mair,
That, truth, my head is grown right diazie,
And something sair."

Her dowff excuses put me mad;
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jod!
I'll write, and that a hearty blaud,
This very night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

" Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Though mankind were a pack o' carter,
Route ye aye weel for your deserts,
In terms aye friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
And thank him kindly!"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
And down gaed stumpie in the ink;
Quoth I, " Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it!
And if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I'll prove it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith together,
Or some houch-potch that's righty neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge and carp,
Though fortune use you hard and sharp;
Come, kintle up your moorland harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waf and werg;
She's but a b . tch.

She's gien me monie a jick and flig,
Sin' I could wriddle owre a rig;
But, by the L . . d, though I should beg
Wi' lyars pow,
I'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang's I dowe!

Now comes the sax-and-twentieth simmer
I've seen the had upo' the simmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Free year to year;
But yet, despite the kintle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city Gem,
Behind a kint to lie and sklent,
Or paise-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit burgh to represent
A Bailie's name!

Or let's the gaughty, feudal Thane,
Wi' ruffled mark and glancin cane,
Wha thinks himsel ene cheap-thank hame,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are tane,
As by he walks!

" O Twao' wha gies us each gude gift!
Gie me a' wi' and sende a lik,
Then turn me, if Twao' please, adrift,
Through Scotland wide;
Wi' Cio nor Laidie I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

Were this the CHARTER of our state,
" On pain o' hell be rich and great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n! that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
" The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but He!"

O mandate glorious and divine!
The ragged followers of the Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While scolded sons of Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Though here they scrape, and squete, and
growl,
Their worthless sleevefu' of a soul
May in some future carcass howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And stave their pleasures, hopes, and joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year.

TO

JOHN LAPRAIK.

SEPT. 13, 1765.

Give speed and farder to you, Johnny,
Gude health, hale hands, and weather bonny;
Now when ye're sickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a soup o' branny
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thrash your rigs,
Nor kick your pickles aff their legs,
Sendin the staff a'er mair and bags
Like drivin wrack;
But may the upman grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bixie too, and skelpin at it,
But bixer, daudin showers best wat it,

K F

See my auld scumple pen I get it
Wi' muckle warst,
And took my jockieleg and what it,
Like an clark.

It's now twa moneth that I'm your debitor,
For your brow, nameless, dateless lender,
Abusin me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane!

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sels;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browner wives and whiskie stills,
They are the Muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat it,
And if ye mak objections at it,
Then hand in nieve some day we'll knot it,
And winnae take,
And when wi' usquabae we've wat it
It winnae break.

But if the braus and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
And a' the vint in the yard,
And cheekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
As winter night.

Then mused-inspirin aqua-vitæ
Shall make us bairn see blythe and winy,
Till ye forget ye're auld and gairy,
And be as easy
As ye were nine year less than thirry,
Sweet aye-and-twenty!

But wacks are cowperit wi' the blast,
And now the sun looks in the wast,
Then I mean rin among the rest
And quat my chamber;
See I subscribe myself in haste,
Yours, RAE the KANTER

TO

JOHN GOUDIE,

KILMARNOCK,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF
HIS ESSAYS.

O Goudie! terror o' the Whigs,
Dread o' black coats and rev'rend wigs,

Sour Bigotry, on her law legs,
Girnin looks back,
Within the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin, glowrin Superstition,
Wae's me! she's in a sad condition;
Fie! bring BLACK-JOCK, her stam physician,
To see her water;
Alas! there's ground o' great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
But now she's got an unco ripple,
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death!
See how she fetches at the thrapple,
And gasps for breath!

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
Gae in a galloping consumption,
Not a' the quacks wi' a' their pumpions,
Will ever mend her,
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption,
Death soon will end her!

'Tis you and Taylor* are the chief,
Wha are to blame for this mischief;
But gin the Lord's ain folks get leave,
A room tar-barrel
And twa red pens wad send relief,
And end the quarrel.

TO

DAVIE,†

A BROTHER POET.

JANUARY, —

I.

WHILE winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.

* See Note, p. 136.

† David Sillar, author of a volume of Poems
in the Scottish dialect, published at Kilmar-
nock, 1789.

While frosty winds blow in the drift,
 Een to the chimla log,
 I godge a wee the great folk's gift,
 That live ane bled and snug;
 I tent less, and want less
 Their roomy fire-side;
 But hanker and canker
 To see their carned pride.

II.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,
 To see how things are shar'd;
 How bent o' chief's are whiles in want,
 While coofs on countless thousands rant,
 And ken na how to wait'r;
 But Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
 Though we hae little gear
 We're fit to win our daily bread
 As lang's we're hale and fier:
 "Mair spier na, nor fear na,"
 Auld age ne'er mind a fig,
 The last o't, the worst o't,
 Is only but to beg.

III.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
 When baxes are cras'd, and blude is thin,
 Is, doubtless, great distress;
 Yet then content could make us blest:
 Ev'n then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste
 Of truest happiness.
 The honest heart that's free frae a'
 Intended fraud or guile,
 However Fortune kick the ha',
 Hae aye some cause to smile:
 And mind will, you'll find will,
 A comfort this nag sma'e!
 Nae mair then, we'll care them,
 Nae farther can we fa'.

IV.

What though, like commoners of air,
 We wander out, we know not where,
 But either house or hall?
 Yet Nature's charms, the hills and woods,
 The sweeping vales and foaming floods,
 Are free alike to all.
 In days when daisies deck the ground,
 And blackbirds whistle clear,
 With honest joy our hearts will bound,
 To see the coming year;
 On brigs when we please, then,
 We'll sit and sow a tune;
 Syne RHYME til't, we'll dune til't,
 And sing't when we hae done.

* Ramsay.

V.

It's na in tales nor in rank;
 It's na in wealth like Lon'on bank,
 To purchase peace and rest;
 It's na in makin muckle mair;
 It's na in books; it's na in leir,
 To make us truly blest;
 If happiness hae not her seat
 And centre in the breast,
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest:
 Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
 Could make us happy lang;
 The HAAR aye's the part aye,
 That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
 Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry,
 Wi' never-ceasing toil;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they,
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
 As hardly worth their while?
 Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,
 God's creatures they oppress!
 Or else, neglecting a' that's gude,
 They riot in excess!
 Baith careless, and fearless
 Of either heav'n or hell!
 Excessing, and deceiving
 It's a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
 By pining at our state;
 And, even should misfortunes come,
 I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
 And's thankful for them yet.
 They gie the wit o' age to youth;
 They let us ken oursel;
 They make us see the naked truth,
 The sanna gude and ill.
 Though losses and crosses
 Be lessons right severe,
 There's wit there, ye'll get there,
 Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

But tent me, Davie, see o' hearn!
 (To say aught less wad wrang the carren,
 And Ben'ry I detest)
 This life hae joys for you and I;
 And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
 And joys the very best.

There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
 The lover and the friend;
 Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
 And I my darling Jean!
 It warms me, it charms me,
 To mention but her name;
 It heats me, it beats me,
 And sets me a' on flame!

IX.

O all ye pow'rs who rule above!
 O Thou, whose very self art Love!
 Thou know'st my words sincere!
 The life-blood streaming through my heart,
 Or my more dear immortal part,
 Is not more fondly dear!
 When heart-corroding care and grief
 Deprive my soul of rest,
 Her dear idea brings relief
 And solace to my breast.
 Thou Being, All-seeing,
 O hear my fervent pray'r;
 Still take her, and make her
 Thy most peculiar care!

X.

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
 The smile of love, the friendly tear,
 The sympathetic glow;
 Long since, this world's thorny ways
 Had number'd out my weary days,
 Had it not been for you!
 Fate still has bless'd me with a friend,
 In every care and ill;
 And oft a more endearing band,
 A tie more tender still.
 It lightens, it brightens
 The tenebrous scene,
 To meet with, and greet with
 My Davie or my Jean.

XI.

O, how that name inspires my style!
 The words come skelpin rank and file,
 Amain before I ken!
 The ready measure rins as fine,
 As Phoebus and the famous Nine
 Were glowin ower my pen.
 My spirit Pegasus will limp,
 Till once he's fairly hot;
 And then he'll hiech, and silt, and jimp,
 And rin an unto fit:
 But less than, the best thee,
 Should rue this hasty ride,
 I'll light now, and dight now
 His swart, wisen'd hide.

TO

DAVIE.

A BROTHER POET.

AULD NICKSON,

I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
 For your auld-farrent, frichty letter;
 Though I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
 Ye speak sae fair;
 For my poor, silly, rhymin clatter,
 Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your saddle;
 Lang may your elbow jink and diddle,
 To cheer you through the weary widdle
 O' war'ly cares,
 Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
 Your auld, gray hairs.

But, Davie, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;
 I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
 And gif it's sae, ye sud be lickit
 Until ye fyke;
 Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,
 Be hain't wae like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
 Rivin the words to gar them clink;
 Whyless daes't wi' love, whyless daes't wi'
 drink,
 Wi' jads or masons;
 And whyless, bus aye owre late, I think
 Brew sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' men,
 Commen' me to the Bardie clan;
 Except it be some idle plan
 O' rhymin clink,
 The devil-haer, that I sud ban,
 They ever think.

Nae thoughts, nae view, nae scheme o' livin,
 Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin;
 But jist the pouchie put the sieve in,
 And while ought's there,
 Then, hiech-skide, we gae scrievin,
 And fash nae mair.

Letze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
 My chief, amain my only pleasure,
 At hame, a-field, at work or leisure,
 The Muse, poor hizzie!
 Though rough and raploch be her measure,
 She's seldom lary.

Hand to the Muse, my dainty Davie;
The warl' may play you mony a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Though e'er she be poor,
Na, even though limpin wi' the spavie
Free door to door.

TO

WILLIAM SIMPSON,

OCHILTREE.

MAY, 1785.

I sat your letter, winsome Willie,
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Though I maun say't, I wad be silly,
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxing billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I've believe ye kindly meant it,
I should be laith to think ye himed
Ironie satire, sidelin' skinned
On my poor Music;
Though in sic phrasin terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My anner wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a Howe to speel,
Wi' Allan or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson, the wriiter-chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious pen
Ill suited law's dry, musty pen!
My curse upon your whansome hearts,
Ye Enbrogh genery!
The tythe o' what ye want at carter,
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whyles they're like to be my dead,
(O sad discourse!)
I kinle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Colla now may sidge fo' Gair,
She's gotten Pootie o' her hair,
Chiel wha their chancery wins a hair,
But tunc their jigs,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-earng praise.

Nae poet thoughts her worth his while,
To set her name in mentor'd style;
She lay like some unbekn'd-of isle
Beside New-Holland,
Or where wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gled Forth and Tay a life aboon;
Yarrow and Tweed, to monie a tunc,
Owe Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Nae body sings.

Th' Illinois, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line!
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
And cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Colla's plains and fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks and braes, her dams and dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bure the green, as story tells,
Free southron billies.

At WALLACE' name what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-side flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
Or glorious dy'd.

O, sweet are Colla's haughs and woods,
When linewhites chant among the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While through the braes the cushat croods
Wish waifu' cry!

Er'n winter bleak has charms for me,
When winds rave through the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flae,
Dark'ning the day!

O NATURE! a' thy shews and forms
To feeling, pensive hearts has charms!
Whether the simmer kindly warms,
Wi' life and light,
Or winter howls, in gouty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some troting burn's meander,
And no think lang;
O sweet! to stray and pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may dudge and drive,
Hog-shouter, jundie, stretch, and strive,
Let me fair NANCY'S face describe,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy grumbling hive
Sam owe their treasure.

Farewell, "my rhyme-composing brother!"
We've been owre lang unbekn'd to ither;
Now let us lay our heads throgether,
In love fraternal;
May Eezy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorian' herds like gods sit braxies;
While terra firma, on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice,
In ROBERT BURNS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amais forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this New-Loser,*
'Bout which our HANNES ear aft has been
Maist like to sigh.

In days when mankind were but callans
At GRAMMAR, LOGIC, and sic talens,
They took mae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid LAL-
lans,
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the MOON,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last noon,
Gaed past their viewin',
And shortly efter she was done,
They gat a new one.

This part for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chicks gat up and wad confute it,
And ca'd it wrang;
And muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud and lang.

* New-Loser is a cant phrase, in the West
of Scotland, for those religious opinions which
Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so
screuously.

Some HANNES weel learn'd upo' the bank,
Wad threap auld folk the thing minnik;
For 'twas the AULD MOON turn'd a crank,
And out o' sight,
And backlin-comin, to the leak,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The HANNES and HANNES were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards rae'd and storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words and aiths to clours and nicks;
And monie a fallow gat his ticks,
Wi' hearty crants;
And some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd and brant.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
And AULD-LOSER caddies bare sic hands,
That faith, the youngsters took the stands
Wi' nimble shanks;
The larks forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But New-LOSER HANNES gat sic a cove,
Folk thought them ruin'd sick-and-drove,
Till now amais on ev'ry knowe,
Ye'll find one plac'd;
And some, their New-LOSER fair avow,
Jen quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the AULD-LOSER FLOCKS are
blestin';
Their zealous HANNES are vex'd and sweeten;
Myself, I've even seen them greenin'
Wi' grinin' spite,
To hear the MOON me sadly lie'd on
By word and writ.

But shortly they will cove the louns!
Some AULD-LOSER HANNES in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' Balloons,
To tak a fight,
And say a mouth among the MOONS
And see them right.

Gods observation they will gie them;
And when the AULD MOON's gaus to lee's
them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fash it wi'
them,
Just i' their pouch,
And when the New-LOSER billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

See, ye observe that a' this claver
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"

But though dull prose-folk Latin splutter
In logic culzie,
I hope, we Bardies has some better
Than mind sic brainie.

TO THE REVEREND

JOHN M'MATH,

ENCLOSING

A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S
PRAYER,

Which he had requested of the Author.

SEPT. 17, 1765.

WHILE at the nook the shearer's cow'r
To shun the bitter blawdin show'r,
Or in guiravage rinnin stow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Music, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, and bon', and doon black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Less they should blame her,
And raise their holy thunder on it,
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, and rather hardy,
That I, a simple conner Bardie,
Should meddle wi' a pack o' wordy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can say, wi' a single wordie,
Loose h..ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their aighin, canin, grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, and half-mile
graces,
Their rakin conscience,
Whae greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gaeus,* minka't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than many scores o' gude's the priest
Wha see shus't him;
And may a Bard so crack his jest
Whan way they've us't him?

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

See him,* the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
And shall his fame and honour bleed
By worthless skullums,
And not a Muse erect her head
To cower the bicklums?

O Pope, had I thy snare's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
And tell aloud
Their jugglin hocus pocus arts,
To cheat the crowd.

God knows I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times, I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, and malice fause
He'll still disdain,
And then try seal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, and truth,
For what? To gie their malice skouth
On some poor wight,
And hunt him down, o'er right and rath,
To ruin a wright!

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a Muse as mean as mine,
Who in her rough, imperfect line
Thou daurs to name thee;
To signatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Though blotch'd and foul wi' mony a stain,
And far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those,
Who boldly daer thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite o' undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark, bandini mobs
At worth and merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

* The Poet has introduced the two first
lines of this stanza into the Epistle in which
he dedicates his Works to Mr. Hamilton.
See p. 143.

O Aye! my dear, my native ground!
 Within thy presbyterial bound,
 A candid, liberal band is found
 Of public teachers,
 As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
 And manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
 Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
 And some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd,
 (Which gies you honour,)
 Even, Sir, by heart's esteem'd,
 And winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have usen,
 And if impertinent I've been,
 Impute it not, good Sir, in aene
 Whose heart ne'er wrong'd ye,
 But to his utmost would befriend
 Ought that belang'd ye.

TO

JOHN RANKINE,

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O soon, rude, ready-wined Rankine,
 The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin!
 There's monie golly folks are thinkin,
 Your Dreams* and tricks
 Will send you, Korth-like, a-sinkin,
 Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae the monie cracks and canns,
 And in your wicked, drunken ranns,
 Ye mak a devil o' the aunsie,
 And fill them fow;
 And then their failings, flaws, and wants,
 Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
 That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
 Spare't for their akes who aften wear it,
 The lair in Black;
 But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
 Riven's aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skathing,
 It's just the Blee-cows' badge and clathing
 O' aunsie; tak that, ye lee'te them naething
 To ken them by,
 Free onle unregenerate heathen
 Like you or I.

* A certain humorous Dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
 A' that I bargain'd for, and mair;
 Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
 I will expect
 You Sang,* ye'll sen't wi' cannie care,
 And no neglect.

Though, faith, ama' heart hae I to sing!
 My Muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
 I've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,
 And danc'd my fill!
 I'd better gae and sair'd the king
 At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night, lately, in my fun,
 I gae a-roving wi' the gun,
 And brought a FARRICE to the gun,
 A bonnie hen,
 And, as the twilight was begon,
 Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little horn;
 I makket it a wee for sport,
 Ne'er thinkin they wad fash me for't;
 But drill-aa-care!
 Somebody tells the Poacher-coot
 The hale affair.

Some auld-ma'd hands had seen a noot,
 That sic a hen had got a shot;
 I was suspected for the plot;
 I scorn'd to lie;
 So gat the whiole o' my groat,
 And pay't the Fae.

But, by my gun, o' gane the wale,
 And by my pouther and my bail,
 And by my hen, and by her tail,
 I vow and swear!
 The Game shall pay o'er moor and dale,
 For this, next year.

As soon's the clockin-time is by,
 And the wee poum begun to cry,
 L...d, I've hae sportin bye and bye,
 For my gowd guinea;
 Though I should herd the Bockbills bye
 For't in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
 'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
 But twa-three draps about the wame
 Scare through the feathers;
 And faith a yellow Grouse to claim
 And thole their blither!

It plas me aye as mad's a hare;
 So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;

* A Song he had promised the Author.

But PENNYWORKERS again is fair,
When time's expedient;
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

TO

THE SAME,

On his writing to the Post, that a Girl in
that part of the Country was with Child
by him.

I am a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, although not a';
Some people tell me, gin I fa'
As way or ither,
The breaking of ae point, though sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

I hae been in for't ance or twice,
And winna ay o'er far for thrice,
Yet never met with that surprise
That broke my rest,
But now a rumour's like to rise,
A whaup's it the next.

TO

THE SAME,

While he occupied the Farm of Adamhill,
in Ayrshire.

As day as Death, that gruesome carl,
Was driving to the ither ward
A mixie-mixie, moodley squad,
And mow a gail-be-powdered lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the war and garrie,
To him that wrinkles in a halter:—
Adam'd himself to see the wretches,
He mutters, glowin at the blatches,
"By G.d! I'll not be seen behind them,
Nor 'mong the spiritual core present them,
Without, at least, ae honest man,
To grace this d . . . d infernal clan."
By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"L . . d G.d!" quoth he, "I have it now,
There's just the man I want, I' faith!"
And quickly stopped Rankine's breath.

TO

THE SAME,

Written by Burns on his Death-bed, and for-
warded immediately after his decease.

He who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and dead;
And a green grassy hillock hides his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed!

TO

A TAILOR,

IN ANSWER

To a poetical Epistle which he had sent
to the Author.

What ails ye now, ye lousie b . . ch,
To thrash my back at sic a pitch?
Lesh man! hae mercy wi' your sauch,
Your bodkin's bauld,
I did na suffer half ae mach
Free daddie Auld.

What though at times when I grow crouse,
I gie their wames a random pouce,
Is that enough for you to couse
Your servant sic?
Gae mind your seam, ye prick-the-louse,
And jag-the-die.

King David o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mong the lauch sic mischief
As fill'd his after life wi' grief
And bludie rancie,
And yet he's rank'd among the chief
O' lang syne saunes.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cannie,
My wicked rhymes, and drunken rancie,
I'll gie auld cloven Clootie's hauns
An once slip yet,
And snugly sit among the saunes,
At Davie's hip yett.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
Gae fa' upon another plan,
Than garran lauch cowp the cran
Clean back ower body,
And sairly thole their mither's ban,
Afore the howdy.

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the Seusion sort—
And Clinkum, at the inner port,
Cry'd, three times, "Roast!
Come hither, lad, and answer for't,
Ye're blam'd for jobbin'!"

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
And snoor'd awa' before the Seusion—
I made an open, fair confession,
I scorn'd to lie;
And syne Maw John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me.

A fornicator loun he call'd me,
And said my faus frae bliss expell'd me;
I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me;
"But what the matter,"
Quo' I, "I fear unless ye gild me,
I'll ne'er be better."

"Gild you?" quo' he, "and wharfor no;
If that your right-hand, leg, or toe,
Should ever prove your spiritual foe,
You should remember
To cut it off, and wharfor no
Your dearest member!"

"Na, na," quo' I, "I'm no for that,
Gelding's nae better than 'tis ca't,
I'd rather suffer for my faus
A heavy fiewit,
As air owre hip as ye can draw't!
Though I should rue it.

"Or, gin ye like to end the bother,
To please us a', I've just as ither,
When next wi' you lass I forgiar,
Whate'er betide it,
I'll frankly gie her't a' thegiar,
And let her guide it!"

But, Sir, this pleas'd them waur awa,
And therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
I said, "Gude night," and cam awa',
And left the Seusion;
I saw they were resolved a'
On my oppression.

TO AN

ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

Thou's welcome, wren, misshanter fa' me,
If ought of thee, or of thy mammy,
Shall ever danton me, or awe me,
My sweet, wee lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Thou or daddy.

Wee image of my bonny Bessy,
I fatherly will kiss and daut thee,
As dear and near my heart I set thee,
Wi' as gude will,
As a' the priens had seen me get thee
That's out o' h. ll.

What though they ca' me fornicator,
And cease my name in kinara clauer;
The mair they speak I'm kent the better,
E'en let them clash;
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
To gie and fash.

Sweet fruit o' many a merry dint,
My funny toil is now a' tint,
Sin' thou came to the world aklent,
Which fools may scoff at;
In my last plack thy part's be int'—
The better half o't.

And if thou be what I wad hae thee,
And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
A lovin father I'll be to thee,
If thou be spair'd;
Through a' thy childish years I'll a'e thee,
And think't weel ward.

Gude grant that thou may aye inherit
Thy mither's persop, grace, and merit,
And thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failins,
'Twill please me mair to hear and see't,
Than socket mailins.

TO

CAPTAIN RIDDEL,

OF GLENRIDDEL,

On returning a Newspaper and a Review.

Your News and Review, Sir,
I've read through and through, Sir,
With little admiring or blaming;
The papers are barren
Of home news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends, the Reviewers,
Those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and mow, Sir,
But of meet, or namet,
In a fabric complete,
I boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is
To tell all your goodness
Renow'd on your servant the Poet;
Would to God I had one
Like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

ELLISLAND,
Monday Evening.

TO

A GENTLEMAN

Who had sent the Author a Newspaper, and
offered to continue it free of Expense.

ELLISLAND, 1790.

KIND Sir, I've read your paper through,
And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
How gain'd ye, Sir, what mine I wanted?
This mornin' a day I've gain'd and grun'd,
To ken what French mischief was brewin';
Or what the drumlike Dutch were doin';
That vile doupsakelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collicthangie works
Between the Russians and the Turks;
Or, if the Swede, before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the Twalt;
If Denmark, any body spake o't,
Or Poland, who had now the tack o't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin,
How libbat Italy was singin;
If Spaniard, Portuguese or Swin,
Were sayin' or takin' aught amiss;
Or how our merry lads at hame,
In Britain's court kept up the game;
How royal George, the L...d look o'er him!
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekie Chatham Will was lein,
Or gliskie Charlie gat his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the Flea was cookin,
If Warren Hastings' neck was yaukin;
How caucers, stanes, and fees were ran'd,
Or if here a...a yet were us'd;
The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpen, bawds, and opera-girls;
If that dafie buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threeshin still at hixins' tails,
Or if he was grown oughlin' dousier,
And no a perfect kintie couser;
A' this and mair I never heard of;
And but for you I might despair'd of.
So, gratie', back your news I send you,
And pray, a' gude things may attend you!

TO

JAMES TAIT,

GLENCONNER.

AULD comrade dear and brother dinner,
How's a' the folk about Glenconner?
How do you this blue easlin' wind,
That's like to blow a body blind?
For me my faculties are frozen,
My dearest member nearly dozen'd.

I've sent you here, by Johnnie Simson,
Two sage philosophers to glimpse on;
Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
And Reid, in common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought and wrangl'd,
And meikle Greek and Latin mangl'd,
Till wi' their logic jargon dr'd,
And in the depth of science mir'd,
To common sense they now appeal,
What wits and wabsters see and feel;
But hark ye, friend, I charge you strictly,
Peruse them and return them quickly;
For now I'm grown sic cur'd dours,
I pray and ponder hot the house,
My shoon, my lane, I there sit roasin,
Perusing Banyan, Brown, and Boson;
Till by and by, if I hauld on,
I'll grun a real gospel groan;
Already I begin to try it,
To cast my een up like a pyet
When, by the gun, she tumbles o'er,
Flour'ring and gasping in her gore;
See shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning and a shining light.

My heart-warm love to gude auld Glen,
The ace and wale of honest men;
When bending down with auld grey hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
And view beyond the grave comfort him;
His worthy family far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear.

My auld school-fellow, preacher Willie,
The manly mair, my mason Billie,
And Auchentay, I wish him joy;
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad, and Meg the mother,
Just five-and-forty years thegither!
And no forgetting wabster Charlie,
I'm auld he offers very fairly.
And Lord remember singing Sannock,
Wi' hale bregks, saxpence, and a bannock.

And next, my auld acquaintance Nancy,
 Since she is fixed to her fancy;
 And her kind mare has airted till her
 A gude chiel wi' a pickle stiller.
 My kindest, best respect, I send it,
 To cousin Kate and sister Janet;
 Tell them frae me, wi' chieftie be cautious,
 For, faith, they'll aiblins find them fashious:
 To grant a heart is fairly civil,
 But to grant a maiden-head's the devil!
 And lastly, Jamie, for yourself,
 May guardian angels tak a spell,
 And steer you seven miles south o' hell:
 But first, before you see heav'n's glory,
 May ye get monie a merry story,
 Monie a laugh, and monie a drink,
 And ay enough o' needfu' clink.

Now fare ye weel, and joy be wi' you,
 For my sake this I beg is o' you,
 Assist poor Simon a' ye can,
 Ye'll find him just an honest man;
 See I conclude and quit my chanter,
 Your'n, saint or sinner,

FOR THE RANTER.

TO

MR. AIKEN,

SURVIVOR OF THE TAXES,

IN ANSWER

To a Mandate, ordering the Post to send a
 signed List of his Horses, Servants, Wheel-
 carriages, &c. and whether he was a mar-
 ried Man or a Bachelor, and what Children
 he had.*

SEN, as your mandate did request,
 I send you here a faithfu' list,
 O' gudes, and gear, and a' my graith,
 To which I'm clear to gie my aith.

Imprimis then, for carriage cattle,
 I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
 As ever drew afore a pettle.

* The original Editor suppressed several lines in this Epistle. They are here restored from a manuscript of the Author, and printed within crochets.

My Lan'-afore's* a gude auld NAS STEEN,
 And wigh and wilfu' a' his days been.
 My Lan'-ahin's† a weel goun fillie,
 That a' has borne me hame frae Killie L.
 And your auld burro' mony a time,
 In days when riding was nae crime.
 [But ance when in my wooing pride,
 I, like a blockhead boast to ride,
 The wilfu' creature sae I put to,
 L...d pardon a' my sins and that too!
 I play'd my Ellie sic a shavie,
 She's a' be-devil'd with the spavie.]
 My Furahin's‡ a wordy bean,
 As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd.
 The fourth's a Highland Donald haemie;
 A d...d red-wod Kilburnie blastic;
 Forbye a cowie, o' cowies the wale,
 As ever ran afore a tail.
 If he be spar'd to be a beast,
 He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.

Wheel-carriages I hae but few,
 Three carts, and twa are feckly new;
 An auld wheel-barrow, mair for token,
 As leg and balch the trams are broken;
 I made a poker o' the spin'le,
 And my auld mother brant the trin'le.

For men I've three mischievous boys,
 Run deils for ransin and for noies:
 A gadman ene, a thrasher t'other;
 Wee Davock hants the nows in father.
 I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
 And aften labour them completely;
 And aye on Sundays duly nightly,
 I on the Questions§ targe them tightly:
 Till, faith, wee Davock's earn'd me gleg.
 Though scarcely langer than your leg,
 He'll screw you aff "Effectual Calling,"
 As fast as onie in the dwelling.

I've nae in female servan' station,
 (L...d keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
 I hae nae wife; and that my bliss is,
 And ye hae laid nae tax on mine;
 And then if Kirk folks dinna cluch me,
 I ken the devil's dour na touch me.

Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
 Heav'n sent me nae mair than I wanted.

* The fore-horse on the left-hand in the plough.

† The hindmost horse on the left-hand in the plough.

‡ Kilmarnock.

§ The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough.

|| The Shorter Catechism.

My sonnie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonnie, sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L. o' d I ye've got them a' shagither.

And now remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence ont I'm takin;
[Frae this time forth, I do declare,
I've na'er ride horse nor hizzle mair.]
Through dirt and dub for life I'll pae it,
Ere I see dear pay for a saddle:
My travel, a' on foot I'll thank it,
I've murdy bearers, Gude be thankit.

[The Kirk an' you may tak you that,
It puts but little in your pat;
Sae dianna put me in your buke,
Nae for my een white shillings luke.]

This list, wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
The day and date, as under nocht,
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripti haic, ROBERT BURNS.

Mouiel, Feb. 22, 1789.

TO

GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

A DEDICATION.

EXPECT na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleeching, flath'rin Dedication,
To roost you up, and ca' you gude,
And sprang o' great and noble blade,
Because ye're surnam'd like his grace,
Perhaps related to the race:
Then when I'm tir'd—and we are ye,
Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face—how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—mair do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maan please the great folk for a warnefu';
For me! we laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then Lord be thankit, I can beg;
See I shall say, and that's nae flath'rin,
It's just sic Poet and sic Patron.

The Poet, some gude angel help him,
Or else, I fear some ill awt help him,

He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only he's nae just begun yet.

The Patron, (Sir, ye maan forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me)
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it;
Ought he can lend he'll no refusa',
Till aft his goodness is abus'd:
And rascals whyles tha' do him wrang,
Er'n Thar he does not mind is lang;
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does nae fail his part in richer.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptoms ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature,
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Genoot and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild of Ponocaxi,
Who never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It's no through terror of damnation:
It's just a carnal inclination;
He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
And pricks the beast as it were Monday.*

Morality! thou deadly hame,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast stain'd!
Vain is his hope, whose way and trust is
In mortal mercy, truth, and justice!

No—wretch a point to catch a glack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Seal through a Wicker frae a whore,
But point the rake that takes the Door;
Be to the poor like onie whinnane,
And hand their noses to the grunstone;
Fly every art o' LEGAL thieving;
No matter, stick to soun's believing!

Learn three-mile pray'rs, and half-mile
graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang wry faces;
Grant up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, ununch believer!

O ye wha leave the springs of Calvin,
For gumbie dubs of your ain delvin!

* This couplet is inserted on the authority
of Mr. Cromek.

Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeal in quakin terror!
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin with his sweeping beam,
Just fræe till Heav'n's commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale Mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'nin' tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forget my Dedication!
But when divinity comes cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to You;
Because (ye needna tak it ill)
I thought them something like yourself.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever—
I had amais said, ever pray,
But that's a word I need na say;
For prayin I has little skill o't;
I'm baith dead-swear, and wretched ill o't;
But I've repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That kens or hears about you, Sir:—

" May ne'er misfortune's growling bark,
Howl through the dwelling o' the Clerk!
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far houser'd name,
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamilton's, at least a diem,
Are frae their nuptial labours riven;
Five bonnie lassies round their table,
And seven brow fellows, stout and able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the evening o' his days;
Till his wee curlic John's let-ae,
When ebbing life aae mair shall flow,
The last, sad mournful rime bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
Wi' complimentary effusion;
But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest wi' Fortune's smiles and favours,
I am dear Sir, with aul most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Powers above prevent!)
That iron-hearted carl, Wane,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes and black mischances,
While hopes and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,

Your humble servants then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n!
While recollection's pow'r is giv'n,
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim and of Fortune's strife,
I, through the tender gathing tear,
Should recognise my master dear,
If, friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, Sir, your hand—my FRIEND and BRO-
THAR!

TO

GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

(RECOMMENDING A BOY.)

MOSCABILL, MAY 3, 1796.

I.

I SOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird McGann,*
Was here to hire the lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
And wad hae don't aff him':
But hear he learns the callen tricks,
As faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin out auld Crummie's nicks,
And tellin lies about them;
As lieve then I'd have then,
Your Clerkship he should air,
If see be, ye may be
Not findet other where.

II.

Although I say't, he's gleg enough;
And 'bout a house that's redc and rough,
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
And get sic fair EXAMEN strought,
That nae ony fear.

* Mr. Tootie was a dealer in cows, and lived in Mauchline. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle to disguise their age. He was an artful and voracious character; hence he is called a *Snick-drawer*, and the *World's Worm*. In his "Address to the Devil," the Poet degrades that august personage with the epithet of an "auld snick-drawing dog."

Ye'll cauchize him every quirk,
 And shore him weel wi' HELL;
 And gar him follow to the Kirk—
 —Ay when ye gang yourself.
 If ye then, man, be then
 Frae hame this comin Friday,
 Then please, Sir, to lee's, Sir,
 The orders wi' your lady.

III.

My word of honour I hae gi'en,
 In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
 To meet the WARD's Worm;
 To try to get the two to greet,
 And name the airties and the fees,
 In legal mode and form:
 I ken he weel a SKEG can draw,
 When simple bodies let him:
 And if a DAVIS be at a',
 In faith he's sure to get him.
 To phrase you and praise you,
 Ye ken your Laureat scorns;
 The presy's will, you share will,
 Of grateful MINISTER BURNS.

TO

MR. MAXWELL,

OF TERRAUGHTY,

ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

HEALTH to the Maxwells' vet'ran Chief!
 Health, aye unsour'd by care or grief:
 Inspir'd, I turn'd Fair's sibyl leaf,
 This natal morn,
 I see thy life is staff o' grief,
 Scarce quite half worn.

This day thou meets threescore eleven,
 And I can tell that boontous Heaven
 (The second sight, ye ken, is given
 To like Feet)
 On thee a tick o' seven times seven
 Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckles view wi' sorrow
 Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
 May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
 Nine miles an hour,
 Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
 In brannant mounds!

But for thy friends, and they are many,
 Baith honest men and lazzers bonnie,
 May cauldie Fortune, kind and cannie,
 In social glee,
 Wi' mornings blithe and e'enings funny
 Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
 And then the Deil, he daur na weer ye;
 Your friends aye love, your foes aye fear ye!
 For me, shame fa' me,
 If aint my heart I dinna wear ye
 While Burns they ca' me!

TO

MR. M'ADAM,

OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,

In answer to an obliging Letter he sent the
 Author at the commencement of his
 poetical career.

Sra, o'er a gill I gat your card,
 I trow it made me proud;
 "See wha tak's notice o' the Bard!"
 I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
 The senseless, gawky million;
 I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
 I'm rood by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, Sir! 'twas like yourself,
 To grant your high protection:
 A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
 Is aye a blest infection.

Though, by his * bases wha in a tub
 Misch'd Macedonian Sandy!
 On my sin legs through dirt and dub,
 I independent stand ay.

And when those legs to guide, warm hail,
 Wi' welcome canna bear me;
 A lee dyke-side, a sybow-nail,
 And harley-scone shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the broun
 O' mony flow'ry slimmers!
 And bless your bonnie lassies baith,
 I'm auld they're loosome kimmers!

* Diogenes.

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our genery !
And may he wear an auld man's brand,
A credit to his country !

TO

WILLIAM CREECH, Esq.

(OF EDINBURGH)

LONDON.

BRIDGES, MAY 13, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

THE inclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary inn in Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding. I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirkshires; and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Harriot, sister to my noble patron, * "quem Deus conservet!" I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse; but I am jaded up death: so, with a grateful farewell, I leave the honour to be,

Good Sir, yours sincerely.

Auld chuckle RUSKIN's† air disreast,
Down droops her aye weel burnish'd crest,
Nae joy her bonnie basket new
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie's awa !

O Willie was a wily wight,
And had o' things an unco' slight;
Auld Reekie says he kept it tight,
And trig and braw;
But now they'll bask her like a fright,
Willie's awa !

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd;
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst na mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa !

* James, Earl of Glencairn.
† Edinburgh.

Now gawkins, sawpies, gowks, and fools;
Frae colleges and boarding-schools,
May sprout like summer paddock-mools,
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools,
Willie's awa !

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chamber *
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Among them a' ;
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer,
Willie's awa !

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and Poets pour,†
And toothy critics by the score,
In bladic row !
The adjutant o' a' the core,
Willie's awa !

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace;
M'Kenzie, Smart, such a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' mair meet some ither place,
Willie's awa !

Poor Burns, e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken
Scar'd frae its minnie and the clockin,
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gien his heart an unco' kickin,
Willie's awa !

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girdle's bellow,
And Calvin's lock, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceit crinie skullum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellow,
Willie's awa !

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal jod,
And Eurick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blow;
But every joy and pleasure's fled,
Willie's awa !

May I be slander's common speech:
A text for infamy to preach;

* The Chamber of Commerce, of which Mr. Creech was secretary.

† Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. Creech's house to breakfast. Burns frequently met them there, when he called, and hence the name of Levee.

And, haily, unreckin' out to bleach
In winter snow—
When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
Though far awa!

May never wicked fortune trouble him,
May never wicked men hamboozle him!
Until a pow as auld's Methusalem!
He camy claw!
Then to the blessed New Jerusalem,
Flout, wing awa!

TO

DR. BLACKLOCK,

EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, OCT. 21, 1789.

Wow, but your letter * made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
I kenn'd it wull your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring ye to:
L...d send you aye as weel's I want ye,
And then ye'll do.

The Ul-chief blaw the Heron south!
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tald mysel, by word o' mouth,
He'd tak my letter;
I happen'd to the chief in trouth
And bade nae better.

But sibbins honest Master Heron
Had at the time some dainty fair one,
To ware his theologic care on,
And holy study;
And dr'd o' sauls to ware his leir on,
E'en tried the body.

But what d'ye think, my trusty Ser?
I'm turn'd a gauger—peace be here!
Parnassian queans, I fear, I fear,
Ye'll now disdain me;
And then my fifty pounds a-year
Will lade gair me.

Ye glaukes, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha by Cassia's wimplin streamies,
Loup, sing, and lave your pretty limbs,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strong necessity supreme is,
'Mang sons o' men.

* See APPENDIX.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brow and brain o' daddies;
Ye ken yoursel my heart right proud is,
I need na vaunt,
But I'll soon become, throw laugh-woodies,
Before they want.

Lord help me through this world o' care!
I'm weary, sick o't, late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than many others;
But why should ye man better fare,
And a' men brishers?

Come, Firm Resolve, take thou the van!
Thou stalk o' carl-bump in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair;
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
(I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time,)
To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie,
And eke the same to brother Luckie,
I wat she is a dainty chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gracefully, my gude auld cockie,
I'm yours for aye.

TO

MR. TYTLER,

WITH

A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, 1787.

Reverend defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart a name once respected,
A name, which to love was the mark of a
true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected.

Though something like moisture conglobes
in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim
a sigh,
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal.

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne;
 My fathers have fallen to right it;
 Those fathers would spare their degenerate son,
 That name should be scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
 The Queen and the rest of the genery:
 Be they wise—be they foolish—is nothing of mine—
 Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of this epocha make such a fuss,

But loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
 Who knows how the fashions may alter?
 The doctrine to-day that is loyalty sound,
 To-morrow may bring us a halter!

I send you a trifle, a head of a Bard,
 A trifle scarce worthy your care;
 But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
 Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
 And ushers the long dreary night;
 But yea, like the star that athwart glides the sky,
 Your course to the lazar is bright.

TO

SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD,

OF

WHITEFOORD, BART.

ENCLOSING

"The Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn."

THOU, who thy honour at thy God rever'st,
 Who, save thy MIND'S, REPROACH nought
 earthly fear'st,
 To thee this voice offering I impart,
 The tearful tribute of a broken heart.

THE FRIEND thou valued'st, I the FAVOUR
 lov'd,
 His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
 We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
 And tread the dreary path to that dark world
 unknown.

TO

ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTRY.

WHEN Nature her great master-piece design'd,
 And form'd her last, best work, the human
 mind,
 Her eye intent on all the many plan,
 She form'd of various parts the various man.

Then first she call'd the useful many forth;
 Plain, plodding industry, and sober worth:
 Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of
 earth,
 And merchandise' whole genus take their
 birth.

Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
 And all mechanics' many apron'd kinds.
 Some other rarer sort are wanted yet,
 The lead and buoy are needful to the net:
 The CARVE MOUNTAINS of gross desires
 Makes a material for more knights and
 squires;
 The martial phosphorus is taught to flow;
 She kneads the lumpy, philosophic dough,
 Then marks the unyielding mass with grove
 designs,
 Law, physics, politics, and deep divines:
 Last, the sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
 The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
 Nature, well-pleas'd, pronounced it very
 good;
 But here she gave creating labour o'er,
 Half-jest, she try'd one curious labour more.
 Some spumy, scry, IGNEO FARTUS master;
 Such as the slightest breath of air might
 scatter;
 With arch alacrity and conscious glee,
 (Nature may have her whim as well as we,
 Her Hogarth-art, perhaps she meant to show
 it)
 She forms the thing, and christens it—a
 POET.

Creature, though oft the prey of care and sorrow,

When blest to-day unmindful of to-morrow;
A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
Admir'd and prais'd—and there the homage ends;

A mortal guise unfit for Fortune's wife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
Prompt to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live;
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.

Paying the progress climber of mankind,
She cast about a STANDAARD-RECK to find;
And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
Anach'd him to the generous, truly great—
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Fifty the tuneful Muses' hapless train,
Weak, timid handmen on life's stormy main!

Their hearts no selfish, stern, absorbent stuff,
That never given—though humbly takes enough;

The little Muse allows, they share as soon,
Unlike sage, proverb'd Wisdom's hard-wrung boon.

The world were blest did bliss on them depend,

Ah! that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"

Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son,

Who life and wisdom at one race began—
Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,
(Instinct's a brute, and Sentiment a fool!)

Who make poor will do wait upon I should—

We own they're prudent—but who feels they're good?

Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!

God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!

But come, ye who the god-like pleasure know—

Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
Whom arms of love would grasp the human race:

Come, ye who give't with all a courtier's grace;

FRIEND or my LIEGE—true Patron of my rhyme!

Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.

Why shrinks my soul, half-blushing, half-afraid?

Backward, shrink'd, to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—

Heavens! should the branded character be mine!

Whom verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,

Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.

Mark, how their lofty, independent spirit
Soars on the upruling wing of injur'd merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Fifty the best of words should be but wind!
So to heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,

But groveling on the earth the carol ends.

In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dare benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronize their cased lays,
They persecute you all your future days!

Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,

My horny sin assume the plough again;
The pie-bald'd jacket let me patch once more;
On EIGHTEEN-FENCE A-WHERE I've liv'd before!

Though, thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift!

I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift;
That plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,

My Muse may imp a wing for some sublimer flight.

TO

THE SAME,

ON

RECEIVING A FAVOUR.

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a Bard that feigns;
"Friend of my life!"¹⁰ my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me, along your wand'ring spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years.

TO

ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTRY.

Lame crippled of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a Pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, tear'd, dejected, and depressed;
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest;)
Will generous Graham bid to his Port's
wall?

(It soothes poor Misery hearkening to her
tale)

And hear him curse the light he first sur-
vey'd?

And doubly curse the luckless, rhyming
trade?

Then, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.

The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forest, and one spurs the
ground:

Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his
shell,

Th' assassin'd wasp, victorious, guards his
cell.

Thy minions, kings defend, control, de-
vour,

In all th' omnipotence of rule and power,
Foxes and minnows, subtle wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat sink, and are secure.
Toads with their poison, doctors with their
drug,

The priest and hedge-hog in their robes are
snug.

Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and
darts.

But oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the
Bard!

A thing unreachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too! more helpless still.
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hand'sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen
worn,

And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves collect'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich dulness' comfortable fur,
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry
side:

Vampire booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics careless venom dart.

Critics—appall'd, I venture on the name,
Thou'st run-throat bandits in the paths of fame!
Bloody directors, worse than ten Monroes;
He hacks to teach—they mangle to expose!

His heart by cautious, wanton malice
wrong,

By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must
wear!

Foild, bleeding, tortur'd in the unequal
strife,

The hapless Poet flounders on through life;
Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once in-
spir'd,

Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless
critic's rage!

So, by some hedge, the generous weed de-
ceiv'd,

For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast,
By toil and famine worn to skin and bone,
Lies armless of each sugging bitch's sent!

O Dullness! portion of the truly blest!

Calm, shelter'd haven of eternal rest!

Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce ex-
tremes

Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.

If manning high she fills the golden cup,

With sober, selfish ease they sip it up;

Conscious the bounteous meed they well
deserve,

They only wonder some FORTUNE do not starve!

The grave, sage horn thus easy picks his frog,

And thinks the malfard a sad, worthless dog.

When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,

And through disastrous night they darkling
grope,

With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,

And just conclude that fools are "Fortune's
care."

So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,

Not such the workings of their moon-struck
brain;

In equanimity they never dwell,

By urns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hall.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a Poet's, Husband's, Father's fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;

Fled, like the sun eclipse'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears:
Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
Finery, my other stay, long bliss and spare!
Through a long life his hopes and wishes
crown;
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go
down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and sooth his latest
breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of
death!

TO

A GENTLEMAN

WHOM

THE AUTHOR HAD OFFENDED.

THE friend whom, wild, from wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send;
(Not moony madness more astray)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine with the insane frenzied part,
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to play and forgive!

TO

A YOUNG FRIEND.

MAY, 1786.

I.

I LANG has thought, my youthful friend,
A something to be sent you,
Though it should serve me rather end
Than just a kind Memento;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a song,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

II.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And, ANDREW dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye

For care and trouble set your thought,
E'en when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to naught
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

III.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The seal, harden'd wicked,
Wha has nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricted:
But oh! mankind are unco weak,
And little to be trusted;
If SEAR the wavering balance-shake,
It's rarely right adjus'd!

IV.

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's snare,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' IMPORTANT END of life,
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Though poverty hourly snare him;
A man may tak a neighbor's part,
Yet hae nae CAUSE to spare him.

V.

Aye free, aff hand your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yourself
Ye scarcely tell to any.
Conceal yourself at weel's you can
Free critical dissection;
But keep through ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sleek inspection,

VI.

The sacred love o' well-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit ROVE,
Though naething should divulge it:
I wae the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But oh! it hardens a' within,
And perishes the feeling!

VII.

To each dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train succulent;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being IMPARAMOUNT.

VIII.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To band the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your Honour's grip,
Let that awe be your border;
In slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side presences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.

The great CREATOR TO TOGETHER,
Must sure become the CREATURE;
But still the preaching cast forbear,
And ev'n the right feature:
Yet ne'er with wit profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X.

When racing round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a narrow string,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
Is sure a noble Anchor!

XI.

Adieu, dear amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting;
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Sell daily to grow wiser;
And may you better reckon the REAP,
Than ever did th' adviser!

TO

MRS. DUNLOP,

OF DUNLOP.

JAN. 1.

THIS day, Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again:
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion yellow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor hairs,
In vain assail him with their prayer;
Deaf as my friend, he sees them pass,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.

Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds;
Coila's fair Rachel's * care to-day,
And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow,
(That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow)
And join with me a-moralizing?
This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yester-night deliver?
Another year is gone for ever.
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
The passing moment's all we rest on!
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will time, amend'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may, a few years more—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future life, in worlds unknown,
Must take its hue from this alone;
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woful night.

Since then, my honour'd first of friends,
On this poor being all depends;
Let us th' important Now employ,
And live as those that never die.
Though you, with days and honour crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
A sigh life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight pale envy to convulse,
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

TO

THE SAME.

SENSIBILITY, how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell;
But distress with horrors arming,
Thou hast also known too well!

* This young lady was drawing a picture of
Coila from THE VISION.

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
 Blooming in the sunny ray;
 Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
 See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
 Telling o'er his little joys:
 Hapless bird! a prey the forest,
 To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
 Finer feelings can bestow;
 Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
 Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

TO

MRS. SCOTT,

OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE,

In answer to an Epistle* which she had sent
 the Author.

MARSH, 1787.

I.

GODEWIFE,

I miss it weel, in early date,
 When I was beardless, young and blae,
 And she could thresh the barn,
 Or hand a yokin at the plough,
 And though forlornhous sair enough,
 Yet unco proud to learn:
 When first among the yellow corn
 A man I reckon'd was,
 And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
 Could rank my rig and lae,
 Sell shearing, and clearing
 The tither stooked raw,
 Wi' clavers, and haivers,
 Wearing the day awa.

II.

Es'n then, a wish, (I mind its pow'r)
 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.

* See APPENDIX.

The rough but-thiele, spreading wide
 Among the bearded bear,
 I turn'd my weeding-hook aside,
 And spar'd the symbol dear;
 No nation, no nation,
 My envy e'er could raise;
 A Scot still, but blot still,
 I knew nae higher praise.

III.

But still the elements o' sang
 In formless jumble, right and wrang,
 Wild floated in my brain;
 Till on that hairs I said before,
 My partner in the merry core,
 She roun'd the forming strain:
 I see her yet, the sonnie queen,
 That lighted up her jingle,
 Her winning smile, her pecky een
 That gart my heart-strings tingle;
 I fired, inspired,
 At ev'ry kindling keek,
 But basking, and dashing,
 I feared aye to speak.

IV.

Hale to the set, ilk gude chief says,
 Wi' merry dance in winter-days,
 And we to share in common:
 The gust o' joy, the balm o' woe,
 The soul o' life, the heart below,
 Is rapture-giving women.
 Ye surly sunbys, who hate the name,
 Be mindfu' o' your mither;
 She, honest woman, may think shame
 That ye're connected with her.
 Ye're was men, ye're nae men,
 That slight the lovely dears;
 To shame ye, disclaim ye,
 Ilk honest birkie swears.

V.

For you, ma braid to barn and byre,
 Wha sweetly tune the Scotchish lyre,
 Thanks to you for your line;
 The married glaid ye kindly spare,
 By me should gracefully be ware;
 'Twa'd please me to the Nine.
 I'd be mair vauncie o' my hap,
 Doose blingin o'er my curle,
 Than ony ermine over lap,
 Or proud imperial purple.
 Fareweel then, lang hale then,
 And plenty be your fa';
 May louns and crows
 Ne'er at your hallan ca'.

TO

AN OLD SWEETHEART.

AFTER

HER MARRIAGE,

th a Present of a Copy of the Poems of
the Author.

Once fondly lov'd, and still remember'd
dear,

Sweet, early object of my youthful vows,
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sin-
cere—

Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows:

And when you read the simple, artless
rhymes,

One friendly sigh for him, he asks no more,
Who distant burns in flaming, torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

TO

A YOUNG LADY,

WITH A

PRESENT OF A COLLECTION
OF SONGS.

HARK, where the Scottish Muse immortal
lives,

In sacred strains and tuneful numbers
join'd,

Accept the gift; tho' humble be who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast,
Discordant, jar thy bosom-choords among!
But peace among thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love extatic wake his seraph song!

Or pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain en-
dears,
And heaven-born pity her sanction seals!

TO

MISS JESSY LEWARS,

DUMFRIES,

WITH

A PRESENT OF BOOKS.

THINE be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And wish them take the Poet's prayer;
That Fate may in her fairest page,
With ev'ry kindliest, best presage,
Of future bliss enrol thy name:
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare;
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend, the Bard.

TO

MISS CRUICKSHANKS,

A VERY YOUNG LADY,

WITH A PRESENT OF A BOOK.

BRAGGARTS rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,
Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in daisy show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' poisonous breath,
Never baleful meller lights,
Taint thee with unaim'd blight!
Never, never repulse thief
Rise on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol see fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem;
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

TO
MISS LOGAN,

WITH

SEATTIE'S POEMS, AS A NEW-
YEAR'S GIFT.

JAN. 1, 1787.

Again the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driven,
And you, though scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav'n's.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you.

TO
A LADY

When the Author had often celebrated under the Name of Chloris, with a Present of a Copy of his Poems.

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing Muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store,
The comforts of the mind.

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part;
And, dearest gift of Heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart:—

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With ev'ry Muse to raise;
And doubly were the Poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

TO
MR. MITCHELL,

COLLECTOR OF EXCISE,

DUMFRIES.

DECEMBER, 1795.

Friend of the Poet, tried and true,
Who, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alas, alas, the mickle Deil
Wi' a his witches
Are at it, skelpin' jig and reel,
In my poor pouches!

I modestly fe' fae wad hint it,
That own counsellor, I sairly want it;
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It woud be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blade dances,
I'd bear't in mind.

So may the auld year gang out meaning,
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comfort crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licker,
And by fall death was nearly nicker;
Grim loun! he gat me by the fecker,
And sair me shook;
But by gods luck I lap a wicker,
And turn'd a neck.

But by that health I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promis'd mair o't,
My hale and weel I'll take a care o't,
A tender way;
Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
For aince and aye.

TO

COLONEL DE PEYSTER,

DUMFRIES.

In answer to his Inquiries after the Health
of the Author during his last Illness.

JUNE, 1796.

My honour'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal;
Ah! now *uma's* heart has I to speed!

The steep Paramus,
Surrounded thus by holst pill
And poison glasses.

O what a candle wail were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And Fortune favour worth and merit,
As they deserve;
(And aye a rowth, roast-beef and claret,
Synce wha wad starve!)

Dame Life, though fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Aye wavering like the willow-wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that carn carnagiale auld SATAN,
Watches, like bandrums by a ruman,
Our sinfu' soul to get a clasp on
Wi' felon ire;

Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cam saut on,
He's aff like fire.

Ah, Nick! ah, Nick! it is na fair,
First shewing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;

Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare,
O' hell's damnd wair.

Poor man, the flie, aff blazen by,
And aft as chance he comes ther nigh,
Thy auld dame'd elbow yeaks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon beels o'er gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tang,
Thy gurning laugh enjoys his gangs
And murdering wrastle,
As dangling in the wind he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draughting drivell,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quit my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the Devil!
AMEN! AMEN!

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK VI.

SATIRES.

THE

HOLY FAIR.*

A robe of seeming truth and trust
 Hid crafty observation;
 And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
 The dirt of defamation;
 A mask that like the gorges show'd,
 Dye-varying on the pigeon;
 And for a mantle large and broad,
 He wrapt him in Religion.
 HYPOCRISY A LA MODE.

I.

Uron a simmer Sunday morn,
 When Nature's face is fair,
 I walk'd forth to view the corn,
 And snuff the cooler air:
 The rising sun ower Clackmannair,
 Wi' glorious light was glintin'
 The hares were hurrling down the fur,
 The lark-locks they were chasin',
 Fu' sweet that day.

II.

As lightso'mely I glow'd abroad,
 To see a scene so gay,
 Three Hizzles, early at the road,
 Cam skelpin up the way;

* HOLY FAIR is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.

Twa had mantels o' dolefu' black,
 But one wi' lyart lining;
 The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
 Was in the fashion thinning,
 Fu' gay that day.

III.

The Twa appear'd like sisters twin,
 In feature, form, and class;
 Their visage, wither'd, lang, and thin,
 And sour as any thorn;
 The Twan cam up, bag-stap-and-lowp,
 As light as ony lambie,
 And wi' a curchie low did stoop,
 As soon as e'er she saw me,
 Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
 I think ye seem to ken me;
 I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
 But yet I canna name ye."
 Quo' she, and laughin at the spak,
 And takin me by the hands,
 "Ye, for my sake, has giv'n the fack
 O' a' the ten commands;
 A creed some day.

V.

"My name is Fow—your cronic dear,
 The nearest friend ye hae;
 And this is SURPRISSION here,
 And that's HYPOCRISY.

I'm gane to MAUCHELINE HOLY FAIR
To spend an hour in daffin;
Gin ye'll gae there, yeon rank'd pair,
We will get famous laughin
At them this day."

VI.

Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's surk on,
And meet you on the holy spot;
Faith we're hae fine remarkin!"
Then I gae hame at crowdie-time,
And soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

VII.

Here farmers gash, in ridin gait,
Gaed hoddin by their corners;
There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
Are springin o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefoot, thrang,
In silks and scarlet glimer;
Wi' sweet-milk cherrie, in monie a whang,
And fash tak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the PLATE we set our note,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr Black Bonnet throws,
And we moun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gash'd rin,
Some carrying dales, some chairs and stools,
And some are busy bleth'rin
Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
And screen our countrie gentry,
There, rater Jess, and two-three whores,
Are blinkin at the entry.
Here sits a row of tittlin jade,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
And there a batch of wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

X.

Here some are thinkin on their sin,
And some upo' their claes;
Ane curses fast that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs and prays:

On this hand sits a chosen witch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces;
On that, a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin on the lanes
To chairs that day.

XI.

O happy is that man and blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass, that he liket best,
Comes clinkin down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
He sweetly does compose him!
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
And's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

XII.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation;
For RUSSELL speak the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' DAMNATION.*
Should HONNIE, as in ancient days,
'Mang soon o' God present him,
The vera sight o' RUSSELL's face,
To's win her hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

XIII.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin and he's jumpin!

* The original reading was "SALVATION." The present was suggested by Dr. Blair while the second Edition was passing through the press. Burns proposed acknowledging the obligation in a note; but the reverend critic, unwilling to infringe upon the rules of clerical propriety, or doubtful of the merit of his own suggestion, declined the honour. The word is indeed more forcible, and more frequently in the mouths of evangelical fanatics; but it destroys the harmony of the text, and obscures the allusion to the passages of Scripture which the Poet had primarily in view. "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke, ii. 10, 11. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Acts, x. 15. See also Acts, viii. 1. xiii. 2. Rom. x. 15.

His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeal and gestures,
O how they fire the heart devout,
Like cambridgian plumery,
On sic a day!

XIV.

But, hark! the Tawt has chang'd its voice;
There's peace and rest no longer;
For a' the REAL JUDGES rise,
They cannot sit for anger.
***** opens out his could harangues,
On practice and on morals;
And aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jens and barrels
A lift that day.

XV.

What signifies his barren thine
Of moral pow'r and reason?
His English style, and gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some odd pagan Heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

XVI.

In good time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For ***** frae the water-fit,
Accords the holy resturum:
See! up he's got the word o' God,
And meek and mild has view'd it,
While Common-Sense has seen the road,
And off, and up the Cowgate,*
Fast, fast, that day.

XVII.

Wee ***** niest, the guard relieves,
And Orthodoxy rubbles,
Though in his heart he weel believes,
And thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith! the kirkie wants a Manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Although his carnal wit and sense
Like bafflin'-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

XVIII.

Now huz and ban the Change-house fill,
Wi' yill-caup commentators:
Here's crying out for bakers and gills,
And there the pint scowp clatters:
While thick and thrang, and loud and lang,
Wi' Logic, and wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wirth that day.

XIX.

Leave me on Drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it weakens lear,
It pangs us fu' o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or any stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kindle up our notion
By alight or day.

XX.

The lads and lassies, blithely bent
To mind baith soul and body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
And steer thro' the toddy.
On this one's dress, and that one's look,
They're making observations:
While some are coaxin' i' the neck,
And formin' assignations,
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet toots,
Till a' the hills are rais'd,
And echoes back return the shouts:
Black ***** is an speirin';
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow:
His croak o' Hell, where devils dwell,
Our vera "sark does harrow"
Wi' fright that day.

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fu' o' lowin' bransane,
Wha's ragin' flame, and scorchin' heat,
Wad mak the hardest whum-stance!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
And think they hear a coarin',
When personally it does appear,
'Twas but some nother mornin'
Asleep that day.

* A street so called, which faces the Town in Mauchline.

* Shakespeare's Hamlet.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
 How monie stories past,
 And how they crowded to the yill,
 When they were a' dymit;
 How drink gae round, in cogs and cups,
 Among the furms and benches;
 And cheese and bread, frae women's laps,
 Was dealt about in lanches,
 And dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gawdie, gash Gudewife,
 And sin down by the fire,
 Syne draws her kebbuck and her knife,
 The lasses they are shyer.
 The auld Gudemen, about the Grace,
 Frae side to side they bother,
 Till some aye by his bonnet lays,
 And gies them't like a tother,
 Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waeocks! for him that gets nae lass,
 Or lasses that hae naething!
 Sma' need has he to say a grace,
 Or melvie his brow clairthing!
 O wives! be mindfu', ance yoursel,
 How bonnie lads ye wanted,
 And dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
 Let lasses be affronted
 On sic a day!

XXVI.

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rarin' tow,
 Begins to jow and croon;
 Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
 Some wait the afternoon.
 At slaps the billies hae a blink,
 Till lasses strip their shoon;
 Wi' faith and hope, and love and drink,
 They're a' in famous ween,
 For crack that day.

XXVII.

How monie hearts this day converts
 O' sinners and o' lasses!
 Their hearts o' mair, gie night are gae,
 As soft as ony flesh is.
 There's some are fu' o' love divine;
 There's some are fu' o' brandy;
 And monie jobs that day begin,
 May end in boughmagandie
 Some ither day.

THE

ORDINATION.

For sense they little owe to frugal Heav'n—
 To please the mob they hide the little giv'n.

I.

KILMARNOCK Wabsters edge and claw,
 And pour your creeshie notions;
 And ye wha leather rax and draw,
 Of a' denominations,
 Swi'th to the LAIGH KIRK aye and a',
 And there tak up your stations:
 Then aff to BRIDGE'S in a row,
 And pour divine libations
 Forjoy this day.

II.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,
 Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder,*
 But O***** aft made her yell,
 And RUSSELL sair misca'd her;
 This day M'KENLAY uks the flail,
 And he's the boy will blaud her!
 He'll clap a SWANSON on her tail,
 And set the bairns to daub her
 Wi' dirt this day.

III.

Mak haste an turn king David ower,
 And lik wi' holy clanger;
 O' double verse come gie us four,
 And skirl up the BARROWS:
 This day the KIRK kicks up a moure,
 Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
 For Hersey is in her pow'r,
 And gloriously shall whang her
 Wi' pith this day.

IV.

Come, let a proper text be read,
 And touch it aff wi' vigour,
 How graceless HAM † leugh at his dad,
 Which made CASSAN a niger!

* Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr. L. to the Laigh Kirk.

† Genesis, ix. 22.

Or PHINEAS* drove the murdering blade,
Wi' whore-aborring rigour !
Or ZEPHORUS,† the scouldin jade,
Was like a bludie tiger
I' th' inn that day.

V.

There, try his mottle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That STRIPPER is a carnal weed
He takes but for the fashion;
And gie him o'er the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Espacial, Raws this cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threatenin,
Spare them nae day.

VI.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns for' canny;
Nae mair thou'lt rowse out-owse the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' GOSPEL-TAIL
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
And RUMPS o' GRACE the pick and wale,
No gien by way o' dainty,
But like day.

VII.

Nae mair by BABBLIN'S STREAMS we'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-douns a-dryin;
Come, screw the pegs wi' tuncfu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin;
Oh, rare! to see our elbows wheep,
And a' like lamb-tails flyin
Fu' fast this day!

VIII.

Lang PATRICKAGE wi' rod o' airn,
Has thar'd the Kirk's andoin,
As laely FENWICK, air forlorn,
Has proven to his ruin;
Our Patron, bonny man! GLENCAIRN,
He saw mischief was brewin;
And like a godly elect bairn,
He's wald us on a true aye,
And sound this day.

* Numbers, xxv. 6.

† Exodus, ix. 23.

IX.

Now R***** harangue nae mair,
But seek your gah for ever;
Or try the wicked town of AYE,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a Shaver;
Or to the NATHERTOWN repair,
And turn a Carpet-weaver
Aft-hand this day.

X.

Meenies and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones;
Auld HOAXER did the LATEN KISS witch,
Just like a winkin baudrons;
And aye he catch'd the ither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour moun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

XI.

See! see! auld Orthodoxy's face
She's swingin through the city!
Hark! how the mine-sail'd cat the plays!
I vow its once pretty:
There, Learning, wi' his Greekish face,
Gruntin out some Latin ditty;
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to JAMIE BRATTIN
Her plaint this day.

XII.

But there's Morality himself,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the ither yell,
Between his twa companions!
See! how the peels the skin and fell,
As aye were peelin onions!
Now—there—they're packed off to hell
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come house about the poorest!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter;
M'KENZIE, RUSSELL, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture;
They'll gie her on a rape a boyse,
And cover her measure shorter
By the head some day.

XIV.

Come, bring the fither matchkin in,
 And here's, for a conclusion,
 To every Nae Laver + mother's son,
 From this time forth, Confusion :
 If mair they deave us with their din,
 Or Patronage intrusion,
 We'll fight a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
 We'll rin them off in fusion
 Like oil, to-mor day.

ADDRESS

TO THE

UNCO GUDE, OR THE RIGIDLY
 RIGHTEOUS.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
 And lump them aye together,
 The strict Righteous is a fool,
 The strict Wise anither:
 The clearest coze that e'er was dight
 May hae some pyles o' raff in :
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random sin o' daffin.
 SOLOMON.—Eccles. vii. 16.

I.

O ye wha are the gude yoursel,
 See pious and aye holy,
 Ye've sought to do bon mark and tell
 Your neebor's faults and folly:
 Whase life is like a west-gate mill,
 Supply'd wi' store o' water,
 The heaviest happier's ebbing still,
 And saul the clap plays chimel.

II.

Hear me, ye venerable coze,
 As counsel for poor morals,
 That frequent pass daunce Wisdom's door
 For glaikit Folly's portals;
 I, for their thoughtless, careless maket,
 Would here propound defences,
 Their doocie tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
 And shudder at the niffer,
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What makes the mighty differ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's a' mair than a' the lave)
 Your better are o' hiding.

IV.

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What ragings mak his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop:
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye stud your tea-way;
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It makes an unco lee-way.

V.

See social life and glee sink down,
 All joyous and unshinking,
 Till quite transmogrify'd, they're grown
 Debauchery and drinking:
 O, would they say to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences;
 Or, your more dreaded hell to state,
 Damnation of expences!

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
 Ty'd up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor FRAILTY names,
 Support a change o' cases;
 A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
 A treacherous inclination—
 But, let me whisper i' your lug,
 Ye're, aiblins, usque temptation.

VII.

Then gently scan your brother man,
 Still gentler sister woman;
 Though they may gang a kenning wrong;
 To step aside is human:
 One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving way they do it:
 And just as homely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII.

Who made the heart, tis He alone
 Decidedly can try us,
 He knows each chord—in various tone,
 Each spring in various bias:

Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's destined.

THE

KIRK'S ALARM.*

I.

Orthodox, Orthodox,
Who believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience;
There's a heretic blast,
Has been blown in the west,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

II.

Dr. Mac †, Dr. Mac,
You should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil-doers wi' terror;
To join fath and sense
Upon any pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

III.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad, I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewin';
Provost John ‡ is still deaf
To the church's relief,
And orator Bob § is in ruin.

* This satire was written a short time after the publication of Dr. McGill's Essay (1785), at the request of one of the friends of that reverend divine.

† Dr. Thomas McGill, minister of the collegiate church of Ayr.

‡ John Ballantyne, Esq. provost of Ayr, brother of the gentleman to whom the Poet inscribed "The Brigs of Ayr."

§ Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking. He had the principal management of the Doctor's cause before the Presbytery, and also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Mr. Hamilton, and through him formed an acquaintance with Burns.

IV.

D'rymple mild, * D'rymple mild,
Though your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Susan must have ye,
For preaching that three's one and two.

V.

Ramble John, † Ramble John,
Mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lag out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adle,
And roast every nose of the damn'd.

VI.

Singer James, ‡ Singer James,
Leave the fair Killie dames,
There's a holier chase in your view;
I'll lay on your head,
That the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

VII.

Singer Sawney, § Singer Sawney,
Are ye harding the penny,
Unconscious what evils await?
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul;
For the foul Thief is just at your gate.

VIII.

Daddy Auld, || Daddy Auld,
There's a Tod ¶ in the fold,

* The reverend William Dalrymple, colleague of Dr. McGill.

† Mr. John Russell, minister of the Chapel of Ease, Kilmarnock, who had a quarrel with Mr. Moodie, a brother pastor, which gave rise to the satire of "The Two Herds."

‡ The reverend James McKimlay, the hero of "The Ordination."

§ Mr. Alexander Moodie, minister of Recarnous.

|| Mr. William Auld, minister of Manachline.

¶ The reverend John Tod, minister of Manachline, uncle-in-law of Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

A Tod mickle waur than the Clerk; *
Though ye can do little skairth,
Ye'll be in at the death,
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bark.

IX.

Davie Blunser, † Davie Blunser,
If for a waist ye do muner,
The corps is na nice o' recreant;
Yet to worth let's be jua,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ane was the king of the brussa.

X.

Jamie Goose, ‡ Jamie Goose,
Ye hae made but room roose,
In hunting the wicked Lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark,
For the Lord's haly ark,
He has cooper'd and ca'd a wrang pin in't.

XI.

Foot Willie, § Foot Willie,
Gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your Liberty's Chain and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a wride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he hid.

XII.

Andre Gouk, || Andre Gouk,
Ye may slender the book,
And the book out the waur, let me tell ye!
Ye are rich, and look big,
But lay by hae and wig,
And ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq. writer in *Mauchline*, and Clerk to the Justice of Peace Courts, who had shortly before exposed a dark transaction concerning the poor funds, in which Holy Willie and the Minister were implicated. Holy Willie revenged himself in beseeching the Lord to "curse his basket and his more, his kail and his possesors!" Luckily for "the Clerk," his prayer was not heard.

† Mr. David Grant, of the parish of Ochiltree.

‡ Mr. James Y—g of C—n—.

§ The reverend Mr. William Feebles, minister of the New Town of Ayr, and author of some dull sermons, and a miserable poem called *Liberty's Chain*.

|| Dr. Andrew Mitchell, minister of Monkton, a parish lying a mile to the east of Ayr.

XIII.

Bar Suggie, * Bar Secenie,
Whae mean ye? whae mean ye?
If ye'll meddle wae mair wi' the mair,
Ye may hae some penience
To havins and scums,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

XIV.

Irvine side, † Irvine side,
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share:
Ye've the figure, 'tis true,
Ev'n your foes will allow,
And your friends, they daur grant you aw mair.

XV.

Muirland Jock, ‡ Muirland Jock,
When the Lord mak's a rock,
To crush Common Sense for her sin,
If ill manners were wit,
There's na mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at once. §

XVI.

Holy Will, || Holy Will,
There was wit i' your skull,
When ye piller'd the altar o' the poor;
The timber is want
When ye're usen for a stump,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

XVII.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your spiritual guns,

* Mr. S—n Y—g of S—r.

† Mr. S—h of G—n.

‡ Mr. S—d.

§ This affair was compromised, after twelve months angry discussion, by the Doctor's acknowledging his heresies, and promising that he would apologize for them to his own congregation from the pulpit. He survived his defeat twenty years; and never alluded to it but with a feeling of pity or contempt for the ignorance and bigotry of his enemies.

|| An Elder of the Kirk of Mauchline, who made too free with the funds of the poor. He refers to this circumstance, in his Prayer, with becoming self-abasement, and finds in the weakness of human nature an apology for his crime. See p. 266.

Ammunition ye never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powder enough,
And your skulls are warehouses o' lead.

XVIII.

Poor Burns, Poor Burns,
Wi' your price-skelting turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your Muse is a pipir,
E'en though she were tiple,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

THE

TWA HERDS.*

O a' ye pious, godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep ye frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the wauls and crocks,
About the dykes?

The twa best Herds in a' the wae,
That e'er gie gospel horn a blae,
These five-an-twenty summers past,
O, dool to tell!
Hae had a bicker, black cauld,
Awteen themsel.

O MONROE, man! and wordy RUSSELL!
How could ye rise to vile a brawl?
Ye'll see how New Light Herds will whindle,
And think it fine!
The Lord's cause o'er ye gat air a twinkle,
Sin' I hae min'.

O, Sirs! whae'er wad hae expectit,
Your duty ye wad see neglectit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respectit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves clockit,
To be their guide.

* This satire was among the first of the Author's productions which he submitted to the public; and was occasioned by a dispute between MONROE and RUSSELL concerning a question of parish boundaries. These reverend gentlemen, who both belonged to the Secular party, and had hitherto been sworn friends, now lost all temper, and abused each other before the Presbytery with a virulence worthy of their principles. The Poet, who was present, has rendered it memorable by this burlesque lamentation.

What flock wi' MONROE's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd sour ARMINIAN stunk,
He let them taste,
Frae CALVIN's well, aye clear they drank,
O sic a feast!

The thummers wi' cat, brack, and sod,
Weel kenn'd his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smell'd their ilka hole and road,
Bath out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their blude,
And sell their skin.

What Herd like RUSSELL tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard through muir and dale,
He kenn'd the Lord's sheep, ilka cail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel clab,
And New Light Herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin,
Could shake them o'er the burnin dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa!—O, do I live to see't?
Sic famous twa should disagree,
And name, like villain, hypocrite,
Ik ither gien;
While New Light Herds, wi' laughin spine,
Say neither's liein!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fault,
There's D——n deep, and Peebles about,
But chiefly thou, apostle AULD,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, Sirs, how we're beset,
There's scarce a new Herd that we get,
But comes frae 'mang that curst set,
I winna name,
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

D'YEWIE has been lang our foe,
M'GILL has wrought us meikle woe,
And that car'd rascal g'd M'QUAR,
And bairn the SAAWA,
That a' hae made us black and blue,
Wi' vengeance' paw.

Auld W——w lang hae hauch'd mischief,
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Aon to succeed him,
A chiel wha'll woundly buff our beef:
I meikle dread him.

And monie a one that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turn-toss among coarls,
There's Swire for aye,
I doubt he's but a grey-neck quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors and fells,
Come join your counsel and your skills,
To cowe the lairds,
And get the brutes the power themsel',
To choose their Herds.

Then Orthodoxy yes may prance,
And Learning in a woodie dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites ane air,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France;
Let him bark there.

Then Swaws and D'arwens' eloquence,
M'Gunn's close, nervous excellence,
M'Quae's pathetic, manly sense,
And gude M'Mare,
With Swire, wha thro' the heart can glance,
May a' pack off.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O thou who in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,
Sends us to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie gude or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
When thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin and a shinin light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic joint damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's tane.

When frae my mother's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plang'd me into hell,
To quash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin lake,
Where damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock;
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kenn what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin there and dancin here,
Wi' glee and aye;
For I am kept by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
And sometimes too, wi' worldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defild in sin.

O Lord! yestreen, thou kenn, wi' Meg,
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may't ne'er be a livin plague
To my dishonour,
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I further mean allow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I crou;
But Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kenn, thy SERVANT TRUE
Wad ne'er hae meet'd her.

Maybe thou len this fleshly THORN
Beside thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sic GIFTED;
If sic, thy hand mair e'en be bornt,
Until thou lift it.

Lord bless thy chosen in this place,
For HERE thou hast a chosen race;
But God confound their stubborn face,
And bless their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
And public shame.

Lord, mind Gavin Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cards,
Yet has sic monie takin arts,
Wi' glee and aye,
Frae God's ain price the people's hearts
He wauld aye.

And when we chaunc'd him therefor,
Thou kenn how he brad sic a spleur,
As set the world in a roar
O' laughin at us;
Curse thou his bawker and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that Presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare,
Upo' their heads,
Lord, weigh it down and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My very heart and soul are quakin,
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
And pin'd wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lips and snakin,
Held up his head.

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him,
Lord, visit them who did employ him,
And pass us in thy mercy by 'em,
Not hear their pray'r;
But, for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by none,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
AMEN, AMEN.

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

Hear Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Take up in his shoddy;
His soul has tak'en some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Soot! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the gron,
Observe what's wandin wi' him!

Your bransome Devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But hand your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance you've heard my story.

Your play I will not implore,
For play ye hae none;
Justice, alas! has g'ven him o'er,
And mercy's day is gone.

But hear me, Sir, De'il as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wou'd stain your name,
If it were known ye did it.

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. MR. —.

On his Text, Malachi, iv. 2.—And they shall
go forth, and grow up like calves in the
milk.

Right, Sir! your text I'll prove is true,
Though heretics may laugh;
For instance, there's yourself just now,
God knows, as once Cane!

And should some patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a Sinner.

But, if the lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly Power,
You e'er should be a Sot!

Though, when some kind connubial dear,
Your bus-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of Broom!

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and roars,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank among the Nowrs!

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
Here lies a famous BULLOCK!

ODE,

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

MRS. — OF —.

DWELLER in yon dungeon dark,
Hagman of creation! mark
Who in widow-woods appears,
Laden with unhonour'd years,
Nursing with care a burning curse,
Bairned with many a deadly curse!

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
 Can thy keen inspection trace
 Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
 Note that eye, 'his stream o'erflows,
 Pity's flood there never rose.
 See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
 Hands that took—but never gave.
 Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
 Lo! there she goes—unpried and unblest!
 She goes—but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
 (Awhile forbear, ye tort'ring fiends,)
 Behold them whose unspilling hither hands?
 No fallen angel, hur'd from upper skies;
 'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
 Doom'd to share thy fiery fate,
 She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And art they of no more avail,
 Ten thousand glin'ring pounds a-year?
 In other worlds can Mammon fail,
 Omnipotent as he is here?

O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous beer,
 While down the wretched vital part is
 driv'n!
 The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience
 clear,
 Expires in rage, unknown, and goes to
 heav'n!

THE

HENPECKED HUSBAND.

Coast'n he the man, the poorest wretch in life,
 The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife,
 Who has no will but by her high permission;
 Who has no dispencc but in her possession;
 Who man to her his dear friend's secret
 tell;
 Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than
 hell.
 Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
 I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart;
 I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
 I'd kiss her maid, and kick the perverse
 bligh.

MONODY

ON

A LADY FAMED FOR HER
CAPRICE.

How cold is that bosom which folly once
 lov'd!
 How pale is that cheek where the rouge
 lately glin'en'd!
 How silent that tongue which the school of
 tir'd!
 How dull is that ear which to flattery so
 listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
 From friendship and dearest affection re-
 mov'd;
 How doubly severer, Elias, thy fate,
 Thou diest unwept as thou livest un-
 lov'd!

Love, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on
 you;
 So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a
 tear;
 But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
 And flowers let us cull for Elias's cold
 bier.

We'll search through the garden for each
 silly flower,
 We'll roam through the forest for each idle
 weed;
 But chiefly the needle, so typical, shower,
 For none e'er approach'd her but reed the
 rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure
 the lay;
 Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
 There keen Indignation shall dart on her
 prey,
 Which spurning Contempt shall redeem
 from his ire.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
 What once was a butterfly, gay in life's
 beam;
 Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
 Want only of goodness denied her re-
 venge.

A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statue
blames with reason;
But surely Bunams were ne'er indicted trea-
son.

On reading, in the public papers, the Lau-
rence's Ode, with the other parade of June 4,
1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep,
than he imagined himself transported to the
Birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy
made the following ADDRESS.

I.

Good-morning to your Majesty!
May heav'n augment your blisses,
On every new Birth-day ye see,
A humble Poet wishes!
My Bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Among the Birth-day dressers
See fine this day.

II.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By many a lord and lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's once easy said ay;
The Poets, too, a vocal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-tun'd and ready,
Wad ye ye throw ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye uncouth ready,
Og sic a day.

III.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place
Am I your humble debtor;
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's mair to wear o' the race,
And aiblins are been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted;
But facts are chiefs that winna ding,
And downa be disputed:

Your royal seat, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right refi and clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
And less, will gang about it
Then did ae day.

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But faith! I muckle dook, my Sire,
Ye've trusted minimisation
To chaps, wha, in a barn o' byre,
Wad better fill'd their smision
Than court ye now day.

VI.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plasser;
Your sair taxation doot her fleece
Till she has scarce a tinner;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing fause,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the gear,
I shortly hoost to passure
I' the craft some day.

VII.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Piat,
When taxes he enlarges,
(And Will's a true guid fallow's get,
A name nae envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
And lessen a' your charges;
But, God's-sake! let nae saving-fits,
Abridge your bonnie barges
And hoost this day.

VIII.

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
And may ye tax corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll nae neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty and subjection
This great birth-day.

IX.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple Poet gies ye?

That bonnie bairn-time, Hear'n has lent,
 Still higher may they heave ye
 In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
 For ever to release ye
 From care that day.

X.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
 I tell your Highness fairly,
 Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
 I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
 But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
 And curse your folly sairly,
 That e'er ye brak Diana's pacts,
 Or ranted dice wi' Charlie,
 By night or day.

XI.

Yet aft a rugged cower't been known
 To mak a noble aiver;
 So, ye may deacefully fill a throne,*
 For a' their clish-ma-claver:
 There, him † at Agincourt wha thone,
 Few better were or heavier;
 And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John, ‡
 He was an once shaver
 For monie a day.

XII.

For you, right ver'rind Censuror,
 Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
 Although a ribbon at your lug
 Wad been a dream completer:

* It is gratifying to reflect how marvellously this benevolent anticipation has been realized.

† King Henry V.

‡ Sir John Falstaff: vide Shakespeare.

As ye disown yon poughy dog
 That bears the keys of Peter,
 Then, swish! and get a wife to hug,
 Or smooch! ye'll gain the mure
 Some luckless day.

XIII.

Young, royal Tarry Breaks, I learn,
 Ye've lately come adwain her;
 A glorious galley, ‡ uen and uern,
 Wad rig'd for Venus' harver;
 But frae bang out that she'll discern
 Your hymeneal charter,
 Then heave aboard your grapple arm,
 And large upo' her quarter,
 Come fall-that day.

XIV.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
 Ye royal lasses dainty,
 Hear'n mak you gude as wool as braw,
 And gie you lads aplenty:
 But sweeter na British Boys aye a',
 For kings are unco scant aye;
 And German gentles are butams',
 They're better jua than want aye
 On onie day.

XV.

God bless you a'! consider now
 Ye're unco muckle sancter;
 But, ere the course o' life be through,
 It may be binner sancter:
 And I hae seen their coggit fu',
 That yet hae tarrow't at it;
 But or the day was done, I trow,
 The laggan they hae clauert
 Fu' clean that day.

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK VII.

EPIGRAMS, EPITAPHS, ETC.

EPIGRAM

On Elphinston's Translation of Marialis's
Epigrams.

O Taste whom Poetry abhors,
Whom Prose has turned out of doors,
Heard'st thou that groan—pressed no further,
'Twas laurel'd Marialis roaring murder.

EXTEMPORE,

Written in a Lady's Pocket-Book.

GRANT me, indulgent Hear'n, that I may live
To see the miscreants feel the pains they give;
Dear Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till slave and despot be but things which were.

EXTEMPORE,

In answer to an Invitation to spend an Hour
at a Tavern.

THE King's men humble address, I
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I'll be wif'g by and bye;
Or else the Devil's be in it.

IMPROMPTU

ON MRS. ——'S BIRTH-DAY.

4th Nov. 1793.

OLD Winter with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer prefer'd:
What have I done, of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless urn no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drops, dreary, slow;
My dismal month no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English, hanging, drowning.
Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift will so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me;
'Tis done! says Jove; to end my story,
And Winter once rejoic'd in glory.

EPIGRAM.

When ***** deceased, to the Devil went
down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Susan's
own crown;
Thy fool's head, quoth Susan, that crown shall
wear never,
I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so
clever.

VERSES

Written on the Windows of the Globe
Tavern, Dumfries.

The greybeard, Old Windom, may boast of
his treasures,
Give me with gay Polly to live ;
I grant him his calm-blooded, time-scented
pleasures,
But Polly has raptures to give.

I MURDER have by field or flood,
Though glory's name may screen us;
In wars at home I'll spend my blood,
Life-giving war of Venus.

The deities that I adore,
Are social Peace and Plenty,
I'm better pleased to make one more,
Than be the death of twenty.

In politics if thou would'st mix,
And mean thy fortunes be ;
Bear this in mind, be deaf and blind,
Let great folks hear and see.

LINES

Written under the Picture of the celebrated
Miss Burns.

Cease, ye prudes, your envious railing,
Lovely Burns has charms—confess ;
True it is, she had one failing;
Had a woman ever less?

LINES

On being asked, why God had made Miss
Davis so little and Mrs. *** so large;
written on a Pane of Glass in the Inn at
Mosset.

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because God meant mankind should set
The higher value on it.

LINES

Written at Dumfries Theatre (1794), and pre-
sented to Mrs. Kemble, on seeing her in
the Character of Yarioo.

KEMBLE, thou curst my unbelief
Of Moses and his rod ;
At Yarioo's sweet notes of grief,
The rock with tears had flow'd.

LINES

ON MISS J. SCOTT, OF AYR.

On! had each Scot of ancient times,
Been, JEANY SCOT, as thou art,
The bravest heart on English ground,
Had yielded like a coward.

EPIGRAM.

Burns, accompanied by a friend, having
gone to Inventory at a time when there were
some company there on a visit to the Duke
of Argyll, finding himself and his companion
entirely neglected by the Inn-keeper, whose
whole attention seemed to be occupied with
the visitors of his Grace, expressed his dis-
approbation of the incivility with which they
were treated in the following lines.

Woe'er he be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he comes to wait upon
The Lord, their God, his Grace.

There's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland crab and hanger ;
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in an anger.

A VERSE

Composed and repeated by the Author, to
the Master of the House, on taking leave
at a Place in the Highlands, where he had
been hospitably entertained.

When Death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come ;
In heaven itself, I'll ask no more,
Than just a Highland welcome.

VERSES

Written on the Window of the Inn
at Carron.

We came on here to view your works
In hopes to be made wise,
But only, less we going to hell,
It may be our surprise:

But when we stir'd at your door
Your porter thought us here;
See may, should we to hell's yetts come,
Your billy Sauter sair us!

LINES

Written on a Window, at the King's Arms
Tavern, Dumfries.

Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this
uncaring
'Gainst poor Excisemen? give the cause a
hearing:
What are your landlords' rent-rolls? taxing
lodgers:
What premises, what? even monarchs' mighty
palaces:
Nay, what are priests? those seeming godly
women:
What are they, pray, but spiritual excise-
men?

EPIGRAM

ON CAPTAIN GROSE.

THE Devil got notice that GROSE was a-dying,
So whip! at the summons, old Satan came
flying,
But when he approach'd where poor FRANCIS
lay moaning,
And saw each bed-post with its burden a-
groaning,
Astonish'd! confounded! cry'd Satan, By
God!
I'll woe 'em, ere I take such a damnable
load.*

* Mr. Grose was exceedingly corpulent, and used to rally himself, with the greatest good humour, on the singular rotundity of his figure. The Epigram was written in a moment of festivity, and was much relished by the antiquarian.

LINES

Written on a Window, in Friar's Carse Her-
mitage, on the late Mr. Riddell's Estate.

To Riddell, much lamented man!
This tied cot was dear;
Wanderer, dost value matchless worth?
This tied cot never!

VERSE

TO MR. SYME,

With a Present of a Dozen of Porter.

O, had the milk thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
'Twere drink for first of human kind,
A gift that e'en for Syme were fit.

EXTEMPORE,

TO MR. SYME,

On refusing to dine with him, after having
been promised the first of Company and
the first of Cookery.

No more of your guests, be they tided or not,
And cookery the first in the nation,
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
Is proof to all other temptation.

EXTEMPORE,

On being appointed to the Excise.

Searching sold wives' barrels,
Och, ho! the day!
That clarty barn should stain my laurels;
But—what'll ye say?
These moving things, car'd wives and weans,
Wad move the very bears o' stanes!

LINES

On hearing that there was Falshood in the
reverend Dr. B——'s very Looks.

THAT there is falshood in his looks,
I must and will deny:
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

LINES

On seeing the beautiful Seat of Lord G——.

What dost thou in that mansion fair?
 Fit, G——, and fad
 Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
 The picture of thy mind!

ON THE SAME.

No Stewart art thou, G——,
 The Stewarts all were brave;
 Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
 Not one of them a knave.

ON THE SAME.

Bright ran thy line, O G——,
 Through many a far-fam'd sire!
 So ran the far-fam'd Roman way,
 So ended in a mire.

TO THE SAME,

On the Author being threatened with his
 Resentment.

SPARE me thy vengeance, G——,
 In quiet let me live;
 I ask no kindness at thy hand,
 For thou hast none to give.

A GRACE.

Lord, we thank and thee adore
 For temp'ral gifts we little merit;
 At present we will ask no more,
 Let William Hiskop give the Spirit.

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

O Taste in whom we live and move,
 Who mad'st the sea and shore,
 Thy goodness constantly we prove,
 And grateful would adore.

And if it please thee, Power above,
 Still grant us, with such more,
 The Friend we trust, the Fair we love,
 And we desire no more.

EXTEMPORE.

On being called upon for a Song, at a Morn-
 ing of the Dumfries Volunteers, held to
 commemorate the Anniversary of Rod-
 ney's Victory, April 18, 1752.

INSTEAD of a Song, Boys, I'll give you a
 Toast,
 Here's the mem'ry of those on the wall'd
 that we've lost:
 That we've lost, did I say? Nay, by Heav'n,
 that we found;
 For their fame it shall last while the world
 goes round.
 The next, in succession, I'll give you the
 King,
 Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he
 swing!
 And here's the grand fabric, our free Con-
 stitution,
 As built on the base of the great Revolution;
 And longer with Politics not to be cress'd,
 Be Anarchy cur'd, and be Tyranny dam'd;
 And who would to Liberty e'er prove dis-
 loyal,
 May his son be a hangman, and he his son
 trial.

EXTEMPORE.

On a young Lady desiring him to pull her a
 Sprig of Shoc-thorn to adorn her brow.

FROM the white blossom'd aloe my dear
 Chloe requested
 A sprig, her fair brow to adorn;
 Nay, by Heaven, said I, may I perish, if ever
 I plant in your bosom a thorn.

EPIGRAM.

Our Queen Artemisia, as old stories tell,
 When depriv'd of her husband she loved to
 we'll,
 In respect for the love and affection he'd
 shown her,
 She reduc'd him to dust, and she drank up
 the powder.
 But Queen S*****, of a different com-
 plexion,
 When call'd on to order the fun'ral di-
 rection,
 Would have us her dead lord, on a slender
 pretence,
 Not to show her respect, but—to save the
 expence.

EPITAPH

ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY
SQUIRE.

As father Adam first was fool'd,
A case that's still too common,
Here lies a man a woman fool'd,
The Devil rul'd the woman.

EPIGRAM

ON SAID OCCASION.

O DEATH! hadst thou but spar'd his life,
Whom we this day lament,
We freely wad exchange'd the WIFE,
And a' been well content.

Es'n as he is, could in his graff,
The swap we yet will do't;
Tak thou the carlin's carcan aff,
Thou'st get the SAUL to boot.

EPITAPH

ON A CELEBRATED RULING
ELDER.

HERE LINGER **** in death does sleep;
To Hell, if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,
He'll haud it weel together.

ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

BELIEVE this man lie Jamie's banes;
O Death! it's my opinion,
Thou'st ne'er took such a blash'tin' ban,
Into thy dark dominions!

ON WEE JOHNNIE.

His jest wae Johnnie,

Wha'er thou art, O reader, know,
That Death has murder'd Johnnie!
And here his BODY lies fu' low—
For SAUL he ne'er had onie!

EPITAPH

ON D— C—.

HERE LIES IN EARTH A ROOT OF HELL,
Set by the Deil's ain dibble;
This worthless body damn'd himself,
To save the Lord the trouble.

ON A SCHOOLMASTER,

IN FIVE-VERSE.

HERE LIE WILLIE M—his banes,
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schoolin' of your weans;
For clever Death he'll mak 'em!

ON A COUNTRY LAIRD,

NOT QUITE SO WISE AS SOLOMON.

Bless JESUS CHRIST, O Cloochurn,
With grateful lifted eyes,
Who said that neer the SOUL aroose,
But BODY too must rise.
For had he said "the soul aroose
" From death I will deliver,"
Alas, alas! O Cloochurn,
Then thou hadst slept for ever!

ON WALTER S—.

SIC A REPTILE WAS WAE,
Sic a miscreant slave,
That the worms ev'n damn'd him,
When laid in his grave.

"In his flesh there's a famine,"
A hare'd reptile cries;
"And his heart is rank poison,"
Another replies.

ON A PERSON NICKNAMED
THE MARQUIS.

Who requested the Author to write one
on him.

HERE LIES A MOCK MARQUIS, whose titles were
cham'd,
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd!

EPITAPH

ON A WAG IN MAUCHLINE.

LAMENT him, Mauchline husbands a',
He aften did assist ye;
For had ye staid whole weeks awa',
Your wives they w'e'er had mis'd ye.

Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
To school in bands thegither,
O tread ye lightly on his grass,
Perhaps he was your father.

ON JOHN DOVE.

INN-KEEPER, MAUCHLINE.

HERE lies Johnny Fidgeon,
What was his religion,
Whae'er desires to ken,
To some other wae!
Mann follow the carl,
For here Johnny Fidgeon had name!

Strong ale was ablation,
Small beer perversion,
A dram was "memorie mori;"
But a full flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
And port was celestial glory.

FOR W. NICHOLL,

One of the Teachers of the High-school of
Edinburgh.

Ye maggots, feed on Nichol's brain,
For few sic feasts you've gotten;
And fix your claws in Nichol's heart,
For deil a bite o'th reason.

ON A LAP-DOG NAMED ECHO.

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now half-extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now half your din of senseless sound
With Echo silent lies.

EPITAPH

FOR R. AIKEN, ESQ.

KNOW thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much lov'd, much honour'd name!
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart Death w'e'er made cold.

FOR G. HAMILTON, ESQ.

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom censure wretches blam'd;
But wish such as he, whae'er he be,
May I be lov'd or dam'd!

ON A FRIEND.

AN honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image bless;
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

ON ROBERT FERGUSON, POET.

No sculptor'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
"No storied urn nor animated bust,"
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.

FOR THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

O ye, whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious reverence and re-
spond!
Here lies the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the generous friend;

The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human
pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's
side."*

* Goldsmith.

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owe fast for thought, owe hot for rule,
Owe blase to seek, owe proud to smool,
Let him draw near;
And owe this gramy heap sing dool,
And drop a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, needless, meals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by !
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave ;
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name !

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Scorn fancy's flights beyond the pole,

Or darkling grobs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit ;
Know, prudent, cautious, self-control,
Is wisdom's root.

EPITAPH

ON ROBERT RUISSBAUX.*

Here Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nec mair,
Could poverty, wi' hungry mair,
Nec mair shall fear him ;
Nor anxious fear, nor tanker'd care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom faht him,
Except the moments that they crush him,
For soon as chance or fate had hush't 'em,
Though e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he hush't 'em,
And thought it sport.

Though he was bred to countra work,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man ;
But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roo'd him than !

* A play upon his own name.

POEMS OF BURNS.

BOOK VIII.

SONGS AND BALLADS.*

THE
RIGS O' BARLEY.

Tune—Corn Rigs are bonnie.

All the old words that ever I could meet
with in this air were the following, which
seem to have been an old chorus.

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonnie;
Where'er you meet a bonnie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.

I.

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:

* The greater number of the Songs of this Book were written for a Work entitled "The Scots Musical Museum," conducted by Mr. James Johnson. It commenced at Edinburgh in 1787, while the author was in that city; and was not completed till after his death. The communications of the Poet have been compared with his MSS., and his last corrections have been uniformly inserted. The Prefates are given in the words of Burns himself. The Notes are derived from the information supplied by his brother Gilbert, Currie, Cromek, and others.

The time flew by wi' tedious heed,
Till 'twixen the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed,
To see me through the barley.

II.

The sky was blue, the wind was mill,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Among the rigs o' barley!
I ken'd her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her ower and ower again
Among the rigs o' barley.

III.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely;
My blessings on that happy place,
Among the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She aye shall bleat that happy night,
Among the rigs o' barley.

IV.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinkin';
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I hae been happy thinkin':
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Though three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Among the rigs o' barley.

CHORUS.

O corn rigs, and barley rigs,
And corn rigs are bonnie,
I'll ne'er forget that happy night
Among the rigs wi' Annie.*

THE

CHARMS OF AUTUMN.

COMPOSED IN AUGUST.

Tune—I had a horse, I had nae mair.

I.

Now westlin winds, and slaughter'g goss
Bring autumn's pleasant weather:
The meacock springs, on whirling wings,
Among the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at
night,
To muse upon my charmer.

II.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:
Through lofty groves the cuckoo roves,
The path of man to show it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

III.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
Some solitary wander;
Awaunt, away t' the cruel way,
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murder'g cry,
The flourish'g, gory pinion!

IV.

But Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading-green and yellow:

* This song was the challenge of a passion which the Poet entertained, in his nineteenth year, for a beautiful and interesting young girl, while he was studying some of the branches of the mathematics.

Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fringed thorn,
And every happy creature.

V.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly press,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

MY NANNIE, O.

Tune—My Nannie, O.

Between yon hills where Lugg * flows,
Many moors and mooves many, O,
The winery sun the day has cloud,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blows loud and chill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, and o'er I'll stand,
And owre the hill to Nannie, O.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, and young;
Nae waur' wiles to win ye, O;
May ill bely' the flammering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spoken as she's bonnie, O;
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
And few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

My riches a' my penny-fee,
And I mean guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me;
My thoughts are a' my Nannie, O.

Our auld Gudeman delights to view
His sheep and kye drive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hands his plough,
And has nae care but Nannie, O.

* Originally Seinchur.

Come weel, come weel, I care na by,
 I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O;
 Nae thing care in life hae I,
 But live, and love my Nannie, O.

GREEN GROW, &c.

A FRAGMENT.

CHORUS.

Green grow the rushes, O!
 Green grow the rushes, O!
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
 Are spent among the lasses, O!

Tussing's naught but care on ev'ry han',
 In ev'ry hour that passes, O;
 What signifies the life o' man,
 And 'twere na for the lasses, O.
 Green grow, &c.

The warly race may riches chase,
 And riches still may fly them, O;
 And though at last they catch them fast,
 Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
 Green grow, &c.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
 My arms about my dearie, O;
 And warly cares, and warly men,
 May a' gae tapalcaerie, O!
 Green grow, &c.

For you see doon, ye sneer at this,
 Ye're naught but senseless wiers, O;
 The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
 He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
 Green grow, &c.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
 Her noblest work she classes, O;
 Her 'prentice han' she try'd on man,
 And then she made the lasses, O.
 Green grow, &c.

~~~~~

## TO ANNA.

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,  
 And waste my soul with care;  
 But ah! how bootless to admire,  
 When faced to despair!

Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,  
 To hope may be forgiven;  
 For sure 'twere impious to despair,  
 So much in sight of heaven.

## THE

## CHEERLESS SOUL.

The chorus is part of a song composed  
 by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular  
 friend of the Author's.

Tune—Jockey's Grey Brecks.

AGAIN rejoicing Nature sees  
 Her robe assume its vernal hues,  
 Her leafy locks wave in the breeze  
 All freshly sleep'd in morning dews.

#### CHORUS.

And maun I mill on Manie \* doon,  
 And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?  
 For it's jet, jet black, and it's like a hawk,  
 And it winna let a body be!

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,  
 In vain to me the violets spring;  
 In vain to me, in glen or shaw,  
 The meris and the linwhine sing.  
 And maun I mill, &c.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,  
 Wi' joy the tantic reedman walks,  
 But life to me's a weary dream,  
 A dream of aye that never wauks.  
 And maun I mill, &c.

The wanton coot the water skims,  
 Among the reeds the ducklings cry,  
 The wately swan majestic swims,  
 And every thing is blest but I.  
 And maun I mill, &c.

The sheep-herd seeks his fauldin' slip,  
 And ower the moorland whistles shill,  
 Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step  
 I meet him on the dewy hill.  
 And maun I mill, &c.

And when the lark, 'twixen light and dark,  
 Elythe wakens by the dairy's side,  
 And mounes and sings on fluttering wings,  
 A wee-worn ghale I homeward glide.  
 And maun I mill, &c.

\* Manie is the common abbreviation of  
 Marianne.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,  
And raging bend the naked tree;  
Thy gloom will smother my cheerless soul,  
When nature all is sad like me!  
And maun I still, &c.\*

## THE

## BANKS OF AYR.

I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica.

I meant it as my farewell Dirge to my native country.

Tune—Rodin Castle.

## I.

THE gloomy night is gathering fast,  
Loud roars the wild, inclement blast,  
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,  
I see it driving o'er the plain;  
The hunter now has left the moor,  
The scatter'd coveys meet secure,  
While here I wander, pen with care,  
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

## II.

THE Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn  
By early Winter's savage torn;  
Across her placid, azure sky,  
She sees the stowling tempest fly;  
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,  
I think upon the stormy wave,  
Where many a danger I must dare,  
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

## III.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar;  
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;  
Though death in ev'ry shape appear,  
The wretched have no more to fear;  
But round my heart the ties are bound,  
That heart transpire'd with many a wound;  
These bleed afresh, those ties I wear,  
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

\* It is to be regretted that the Poet should have been prevailed upon to attach this silly chorus to these fine stanzas, as it perpetually interrupts the train of sentiment they excite. For this reason they ought never to be repeated in singing.

## IV.

FAREWELL, old Collie'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 burning tears my heart declares,  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr.

## THE

## FAREWELL

TO THE BROTHERN OF ST. JAMES'S  
LODGE, TARBOLTON.

Tune—Gude night, and joy be wi' you a'.

## I.

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu!  
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!  
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,  
Companions of my social joy!  
Though I to foreign lands must hie,  
Pursuing Fortune's slid'd'ry ba',  
With melting heart and brimful eye,  
I'll mind you still, though far awa'.

## II.

OH! have I met your social band,  
And spent the cheerful, festive night;  
Oh, honour'd with supreme command,  
Presided o'er the sons of light;  
And by that hieroglyphic bright,  
Which none but craftmen ever saw!  
Strong mem'ry on my heart shall write  
Those happy scenes, when far awa'.

## III.

MAY freedom, harmony, and love,  
Unite you in the grand design,  
Beneath th' omniscient Eye above,  
The glorious Architect divine!  
That you may keep th' unerring line,  
Still rising by the plummet's law,  
Till order bright completely shine,  
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

## IV.

AND you farewell! whose merits claim,  
Justly, that highest badge to wear!  
Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble name,  
To Misconry and Scotia dear!

A last request permit me here,  
When yearly ye assemble a',  
One Round, I ask it with a TEAR,  
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

## FAREWELL TO ELIZA.

Tune—Gilderoy.

### I.

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,  
And from my native shore;  
The cruel fates between us throw  
A boundless ocean's roar;  
But boundless oceans roaring wide,  
Between my love and me,  
They never, never can divide  
My heart and soul from thee;

### II.

FAREWELL, farewell, Eliza dear,  
The maid that I adore!  
A bidding voice is in mine ear,  
We part to meet no more!  
But the last thro' that heaves my heart,  
While death stands victor by,  
That thro', Eliza, is thy part,  
And thine that latest sigh!

## A FRAGMENT.

Tune—Gillcrankie.

### I.

WHEN Guilford good our pike mood,  
And did our helms throw, man,  
As night, at tea, began a plea,  
Within America, man;  
Then up they got the maskin'-gat,  
And in the sea did jaw, man;  
And did we less, in full Congress,  
Than quice refuse our law, man.

### II.

Then through the Lakes Montgomery takes,  
I wat he was na slaw, man;  
Down Lowrie's barn he took a turn,  
And Carleton did ca', man;  
But yet, whan-reck, he, at Quebec,  
Montgomery-like did fa', man;  
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,  
Among his enemies a', man.

### III.

Poor Tammy Gage, within a cage  
Was kept at Boston ha', man;  
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe  
For Philadelphia, man;  
Wi' sword and gun he thought a sin  
Gude Christian blood to draw, man;  
But at New-York, wi' knife and fork,  
Sir-loin he hacked ama', man.

### IV.

Burgoyne gaid up, like spur and whip,  
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;  
Then lost his way, as munny day,  
In Saratoga shaw, man.  
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,  
And did the buckskins claw, man;  
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to see,  
He hung it to the wa', man.

### V.

Then Monrogo, and Guilford too,  
Began to fear a fa', man;  
And Sachville dour, who stood the stout,  
The German chief to thraw, man;  
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,  
Nae mercy had at a', man;  
And Charlie Fox threw by the box,  
And low'd his tinkler jaw, man.

### VI.

Then Rockingham took up the game;  
Till death did on him ca', man;  
When Shelburne mock held up his cheek,  
Conform to gospel law, man;  
Saint Serphen's boys, wi' jarring noise,  
They did his measures throw, man;  
For North and Fox united nocks,  
And bore him to the wa', man.

### VII.

Then clubs and hearts wert Charlie's cards,  
He swept the stakes awa', man,  
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,  
Led him a sair faux pas, man;  
The Saxon lads, wi' loud pleads,  
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;  
And Scotland drew her pipe, and blew,  
"Up, Willie, wear them a', man!"

### VIII.

Behind the throne then Grenville's gone,  
A secret word or two, man;  
While aye Dundas aroo'd the clan  
Be-neath the Roman wa', man;



And Chinkam's wraith, in heav'nly graith,  
(Inspired bardies saw, man)  
Wi' kindling eyes cry'd, "Willie, that I  
Would I hae fear'd them a', man!"

## IX.

But, word and blow, North, Fox, and Co.  
Gowf'd Willie like a ba', man,  
Till Suthron rais'd, and coast their claime  
Behind him in a row, man;  
And Caledon threw by the drone,  
And did her whistle drive, man;  
And twoor fa' rude, thro' dirt and blood  
To make it gude in law, man.

## TO TIBBIE.

Tune—Invercauld's Reel.

This song I composed about the age of  
seventeen.

CHORUS.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day  
Ye would na harm me thy;  
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,  
But noo, I care na by.

YANKEEN I met you on the moor,  
Ye spak na, but gae'd by like moor;  
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,  
But fient a hair care I.  
O Tibbie, &c.

I doot na, lass, but ye may think,  
Because ye hae the name o' clink,  
That ye can please me as a wink,  
Whene'er ye like to try.  
O Tibbie, &c.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,  
Although his pouch o' coin were clean,  
Wha follows onie saucy queen  
That looks sae proud and high.  
O Tibbie, &c.

Although a lad were e'er so smart,  
If that he want the yellow dirt,  
Ye'll can your head anither airt,  
And answer him fu' dry.  
O Tibbie, &c.

But if he hae the name o' gear,  
Ye'll lauch to him like a brier,  
Though hardly he, for sense or lea,  
Be better than the kye.  
O Tibbie, &c.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,  
Your daddy's gear make you sae nice;  
The deil a wee wad spier your price,  
Were ye as poor as I.  
O Tibbie, &c.

There lives a lass in yonder park,  
I wad na gie her in her aark,  
For thee wi' a' thy thousand mark;  
Ye need na look sae high.  
O Tibbie, &c.

## RANTIN ROBIN.

Tune—Daisy Davis.

There was a lad was born at Kyle,\*  
But what na day o' what na mile,  
I doubt it's hardly worth the while  
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Robin was a rovin Boy,  
Rantin rovin, rantin rovin;  
Robin was a rovin Boy,  
Rantin rovin Robin.

Our monarch's hindmost year but aye  
Was five-and-twenty days begun,  
'Twas then a blast o' Januar win'  
Blew hame in on Robin.

The gossip haeckle in his loof,  
Quo' echo, Wha lives will see the proof,  
This waly boy will be nae coof,  
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',  
But aye a heart aboon them a';  
He'll be a credit to us a',  
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

But sure as three times three mak nine,  
I see by ilka score and line,  
This chap will dearly like our kin',  
So leave me on ther, Robin.

Gude faith, quo' echo, I doot you, Sir,  
Ye gar the lauch.....  
But twenty faus ye may hae war,  
So blessings on thee, Robin!

Robin was a rovin Boy,  
Rantin rovin, rantin rovin;  
Robin was a rovin Boy,  
Rantin rovin Robin.

\* A district of Ayrshire.

## JOHN BARLEYCORN.

## A BALLAD.

This is partly composed on the plan of an old ballad of the same name.

There was three kings into the east,  
Three kings both great and high,  
And they has sworn a solemn oath  
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,  
Put clods upon his head,  
And they has sworn a solemn oath,  
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,  
And show'rs began to fall;  
John Barleycorn got up again,  
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,  
And he grew thick and strong,  
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,  
That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,  
When he grew wan and pale;  
His bending joints and drooping head  
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sickn'd more and more,  
He faded into age;  
And then his enemies began  
To shew their deadly rage.

They've usen a weapon, long and sharp,  
And cut him by the knee;  
Then tied him fast upon a cart,  
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,  
And cudgell'd him full sore;  
They hung him up before the storm,  
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit  
With water to the brim,  
They heaved in John Barleycorn,  
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,  
To work him farther wot,  
And still, as signs of life appear'd,  
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wassail'd, o'er a scorching flame,  
The marrow of his bones;  
But a miller usen him worst of all,  
For he crush'd him between two stones.

And they has usen his very heart's blood,  
And drank it round and round;  
And will the more and more they drink,  
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,  
Of noble enterprise,  
For if you do but taste his blood,  
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;  
'Twill heighten all his joy;  
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,  
Though the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,  
Each man a glass in hand;  
And may his great posterity  
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

## THE

## PECK O' MAUT.

TUNE—Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut.

The air is Masterton's—the song mine. The occasion of it was this:—Mr. Wm. Nicholl, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation, being at Moffat, houses Allan, who was at that time on a visit to Dalrimmon, and I, went to pay Nicholl a visit. We had such a joyous meeting, that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in his own way, to celebrate the business.

O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,  
And Rob and Allan cam to see;  
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,  
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

## CHORUS.

We are na fou, we're na that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e's;  
The cock may craw, the day may daw,  
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we men, three merry boys,  
Three merry boys I row are we;  
And monie a night we've merry been,  
And monie mae we hope to be!  
We are na fou, &c.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,  
 That's blinkin in the lift an' hie;  
 She shines an' bright to wyle us hame;  
 But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!  
 We are na fou, &c.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,  
 A cuckold, coward loan is he!  
 Wha last beside his chair shall fa',  
 He is the king amang us three!  
 We are na fou, &c.

### THE LAWIN.

TUNE—Gudewife count the lawin.

The chorus of this is part of an old song, one  
 stanza of which I recollect:

Every day my wife tells me  
 That ale and brandy will ruin me;  
 But if gods liquor be my deal,  
 This shall be written on my head—  
 O gudewife count, &c.

GAUG is the day and mirk's the night,  
 But we'll ne'er array for fause o' light,  
 For ale and brandy's stars and moon,  
 And blade-red wine's the rising sun.

#### CHORUS.

Then gudewife count the lawin,  
 The lawin, the lawin,  
 Then gudewife count the lawin,  
 And bring a coggie mair.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,  
 And simple folk mean fecht and fust;  
 But here we're a' in an accord,  
 For like man that's drunk's a lord.  
 Then gudewife, &c.

My coggie is a haly pool,  
 That heals the wounds o' care and dool!  
 And pleasure is a wanson trout,  
 An ye drink it a' ye'll find him out.  
 Then gudewife, &c.

### FRAGMENT.

To thee, lov'd Nith, thy gladsome plains,  
 Where late wi' careless thoughts I rang'd,  
 Though press wi' care and sunk in woe,  
 To thee I bring a heart unchang'd.

I love thee, Nith, thy banks and brass,  
 Though mem'ry there my bosom tear;  
 For there he rov'd that brake my heart,  
 Yet to that heart, ah, still how dear!

#### THE

### BIG-BELLY'D BOTTLE.

TUNE—Prepare, my dear brethren, to the  
 tavern let's fly.

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,  
 No seaman nor soldier to plot or to fight,  
 No sly man of business contriving a snare,  
 For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my  
 care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;  
 I scorn not the peasant, though ever so low;  
 But a club of good fellows, like those that are  
 here,  
 And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother-his  
 horse;  
 There croun per centum, the ale with his  
 purse;  
 But see you the Canons how it waves in the  
 air!  
 There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

The wife of my bosom, ah! she did die;  
 For sweet consolation to church I did fly;  
 I found that old Solomon proved it fair,  
 That the big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all  
 care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;  
 A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;  
 But the funny old landlord just waddled up  
 stairs,  
 With a glorious bottle that ended my care.

"Life's cares they are comforts," a maxim  
 laid down  
 By the bard, what d'ye call him? that wore  
 the black gown;  
 And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair;  
 For a big-belly'd bottle's a heaven of care.

#### STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,  
 And honour masonic prepare for to throw;  
 May every true brother of the compass and  
 square  
 Have a big-belly'd bottle when harass'd with  
 care.

\* Young's Night Thought.

## A BOTTLE, &amp;c.

Hear's a bottle and an honest friend!  
 What wad ye wish for mair, man?  
 Wha kens, before his life may end,  
 What his share may be of care, man?

Then catch the moments as they fly,  
 And use them as ye ought, man :—  
 Believe me, happiness is shy,  
 And comes not aye when sought, man.

## DECEMBER NIGHT.

O MAY, thy morn was ne'er the sweet  
 As the mirk night o' December;  
 For sparkling was the rosy wine,  
 And private was the chamber;  
 And dear was the I dare na name,  
 But I will aye remember.  
 And dear was she, &c.

And here's to them, that, like oursel,  
 Can push about the forim;  
 And here's to them that wish us weel,  
 May a' that's guid watch o'er them;  
 And here's to them we dare na tell,  
 The dearest o' the quorum.  
 And here's to them, &c.

## THE

## BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

I composed these verses standing under the  
 Falls of Aberfeldy, at, or near Monach.  
 The chorus is old.

## CHORUS.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,  
 Will ye go, will ye go,  
 Bonnie lassie, will ye go  
 To the birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery heath,  
 And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,  
 Come, let us spend the lightsome days  
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.  
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

While o'er their heads the hutch hing,  
 The little birdies mydely sing,  
 Or lightly flit on wansan wing,  
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.  
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

The brigs ascend like lofty wa's,  
 The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,  
 O'er-hung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,  
 The birks of Aberfeldy.  
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,  
 White o'er the linn the burnie pours,  
 And, rising, weets wi' misty showers  
 The birks of Aberfeldy.  
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flie,  
 They ne'er shall draw a wish free me,  
 Supremely blest wi' love and thee,  
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.  
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

## STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.\*

This air is the composition of one of the  
 worthiest and best-hearted men living—Allen  
 Munroton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As  
 he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we  
 agreed to dedicate the words and air to that  
 cause.

To tell the matter of fact, except when my  
 passions were heated by some accidental  
 cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of  
 vive la bagatelle.

Twicest night o'erhang my dwelling!  
 Howling tempests o'er me rave!  
 Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,  
 Still surround my lonely cave!

Cryal streamlets gently flowing,  
 Busy haunts of bare mankind,  
 Winters breezes softly blowing,  
 Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engaged,  
 Wrongs injurious to redress,  
 Honour's war we strongly waged,  
 But the Heavens denied success.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,  
 Not a hope that dare stand,  
 The wide world is all before us—  
 But a world without a friend!

\* Supposed to mean James, Viscount Strath-  
 allan, whose father, Viscount William, was  
 killed at the battle of Culloden. He escaped  
 to France.

## THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.\*

Tune—Morning.

## I.

Loud blaw the frosty breezes,  
The snows the mountains cover;  
Like winter on the waters,  
Since my young Highland rover  
Far wanders nations o'er.  
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,  
May Heaven be his warden;  
Return him safe to fair Strathpey,  
And Bonnie Castle-Gordon.

## II.

The trees now naked groaning,  
Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,  
The birdies dowie mourning,  
Shall a' be blithely singing,  
And every flower be springing.  
See I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,  
When, by his mighty warden,  
My youth's return'd to fair Strathpey,  
And Bonnie Castle-Gordon.

## MY HARRY.

Tune—Highlander's Lament.

The oldest title I ever heard to this air was,  
"The Highland Watch's Farewell to Ire-  
land." The chorus I picked up from an old  
woman in Dunblane—the rest of the song is  
mine.

My Harry was a gallant gay,  
Fu' manly stradd he on the plain;  
But now he's banish'd far away,  
I'll never see him back again.

## CHORUS.

O for him back again,  
O for him back again,  
I wad gie a' Knockhaigie's land,  
For Highland Harry back again.

When a' the lave gae to their bed,  
I wander dowie up the glen;  
I see me down and greet my fill,  
And aye I wish him back again.  
O for him, &c.

\* Supposed to mean the young Chevalier,  
Prince Charles Edward.

O were some villains hangit high,  
And ilka body had their eie!  
Then I might see the joyfu' sight,  
My Highland Harry back again!  
O for him, &c.

## JAMIE.

Tune—There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

This tune is sometimes called, "There's  
few good fellows when Willie's awa." But I  
have never been able to meet with any thing  
else of the song than the title.

By yon cauld wa' at the close of the day,  
I heard a man sing, though his head it was  
grey;  
And as he was singing, the tears fast down  
came—  
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes  
hame.

The church is in ruins, the state is in jars,  
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars;  
We dare na' weel say't, but we ken wha't to  
blame—  
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes  
hame.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,  
And now I greet round their green beds in  
the yards;  
It brak the sweet heart o' my faithfu' caild  
dame—  
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes  
hame.

Now life is a burden that bows me down,  
Sin' I tint my hairns, and he tint his crown;  
But till my last moment my words are the  
same—  
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes  
hame.

## OUR ANCIENT CROWN.

Tune—Awa, Whigs, aye!

Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust,  
Deil blind them wi' the mours o't;  
And write their names in his black book,  
Wha ga'e the Whigs the power o't!

Grim vengeance lang has usen a nap,  
But we may see him weaken;  
Gude help the day when royal heads  
Are hunted like a mousie!

## THE UNION.\*

TUNE—Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

## I.

FAREWELL TO O' our Scottish fame,  
Farewell our ancient glory;  
Farewell even to the Scottish name,  
Sae fain'd in martial story!  
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,  
And Tweed rins to the ocean,  
To mark where England's province stands:  
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

## II.

What force or guile could not subdue,  
Through many warlike ages,  
Is wrought now by a coward few,  
For hireling traitors' wages.  
The English steel we could disdain,  
Secure in valour's station,  
But English gold has been our bane:  
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

## III.

O would, ere I had seen the day  
That treason thus could sell us,  
My auld grey head had lien in clay,  
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!  
But pith and power, till my last hour  
I'll mak this declaration,  
We're bought and sold for English gold:  
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

## MY CHARMER.

TUNE—An Gille dubh cìar dhùbh.

SAV, my charmer, can you leave me?  
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!  
Well you know how much you grieve me;  
Cruel charmer, can you go?  
Cruel charmer, can you go?

\* Burns never mentioned this event without a feeling of humiliation. "Alas!" he writes to a correspondent, "how often have I said to myself, what are all the advantages which my country reaps from the Union, that can counterbalance the loss of her independence, and even her very name? Nothing can reconcile me to the terms, \* English ambassador, English court, &c." "

By my love so ill requir'd;  
By the faith you fondly plighted;  
By the pangs of lovers slighted:  
Do not, do not leave me so!  
Do not, do not leave me so!

## THE

## RAVING WINDS.

I composed these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Rara, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon.

TUNE—M'Grigor of Rara's Lament.

## I.

RAVING winds around her blowing,  
Yellow leaves the woodlands throwing,  
By a river hoarsely roaring,  
Isabella wail'd deplo'ring:—  
"Farewell, hours that late did measure  
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure!  
Hail thou gloomy night of sorrow,  
Cheerless night that knows no morrow.

## II.

"O'er the past too fondly wandering,  
On the hopeless future pondering;  
Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,  
Fell despair my fancy seizes.  
Life, thou soul of every blessing,  
Lead to misery most distressing,  
O how gladly I'd resign thee,  
And to dark oblivion join thee!"

## THE

## ROARING OCEAN.

I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies.

TUNE—Drumhien dubh.

Musing on the roaring ocean,  
Which divides my love and me;  
Wearying Heaven in warm devotion,  
For his weal where'er he be.

Hope and fear's alternate billow  
Yielding late to nature's law,  
Whispering spirits round my pillow  
Talk of him that's far awa.

Ye, whom sorrow never wounded,  
Ye, who never shed a tear,  
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,  
Gaily day to you is dear.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me;  
Downy sleep the curtain draw;  
Spirits kind, again attend me,  
Talk of him that's far awa!

### THE DADDIE O'T.

TUNE—East neck o' Fife.

I composed this song pretty early in life,  
and sent it to a young girl, a very particular  
acquaintance of mine, who was at that time  
under a cloud.

O wna my babie-clouts will buy?  
Wha will tent me when I cry?  
Wha will kiss me where I lie?  
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

Wha will own he did the fault?  
Wha will buy my grooin'-maut?  
Wha will tell me how to ca't?  
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

When I mount the creeple-chair,  
Wha will sit beside me there?  
Gie me Rob, I seek an mair,  
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

Wha will crack to me my lane?  
Wha will mak me fidgin fain?  
Wha will kiss me o'er again?  
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

### I LOVE THEE.

TUNE—My love is lost to me.

This air is Orwald's—the song I made out of  
compliment to Mrs. Burns.

O WERE I on Parnassus' hill!  
Or had of Helicon my fill,  
That I might catch poetic skill,  
To sing how dear I love thee.

But Nith maun be my Muse's well,  
My Muse maun be thy bonnie sel;  
On Corrincon I'll glow'r and spell,  
And write how dear I love thee!

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!  
For a' the lee-lang summer's day,  
I coudna sing, I coudna say,  
How much—how dear I love thee.

I see thee dancing o'er the green,  
Thy waist see jump, thy limbs see cleave,  
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—  
By heaven and earth I love thee!

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,  
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;  
And aye I muse and sing thy name:  
I only live to love thee.

Though I were doom'd to wander on,  
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,  
Till my last weary sand was run;  
Till then—and then I love thee.

### I LOVE MY JEAN.

This air is by Marshall—the song I com-  
posed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns.

N. B. It was during the honey-moon.

#### I.

O'er a' the airts the wind can blaw,  
I dearly like the west,  
For there the bonnie lassie lives,  
The lassie I lo'e best:  
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,  
And monie a hill between;  
But day and night my fancy's sight,  
Is ever wi' my Jean.

#### II.

I see her in the dew flowers,  
I see her sweet and fair;  
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,  
I hear her charm the air;  
There's not a bonnie flower that springs,  
By fountain, thaw, or green,  
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,  
But minds me o' my Jean.

### JEANIE'S BOSOM.

This song is mine.

TUNE—My mother's eye glowing o'er me.

Louie, what reck I by thee,  
Or Geordie on his ocean?  
Dyvor, beggar lount to me—  
I reign in Jeanie's bosom!

Let her crown my love her law,  
And in her breast en throne me;  
Kings and nations, twich, awa!  
Rief randies, I disown ye!

### I HAE A WIFE.

TUNE—I hae a wife o' my ain.

I HAE a wife o' my ain,  
I'll partake wi' naeboddy;  
I'll tak cuckold frae name,  
I'll gie cuckold to naeboddy.

I hae a penny to spend,  
There—chanks to naeboddy;  
I hae naething to lend,  
I'll borrow frae naeboddy.

I am naeboddy's lord,  
I'll be slave to naeboddy;  
I hae a good braid sword,  
I'll tak daunt frae naeboddy.

I'll be merry and free,  
I'll be sad for naeboddy;  
If naeboddy care for me,  
I'll care for naeboddy.\*

### BLYTHE WAS SHE.

I composed these verses while I staid at Ochertyre with Sir William Murray. The lady, who was also at Ochertyre at the time, was the well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Leithrose, who was called, and very justly, "The Flower of Strathmore."

TUNE—Andrew and his cooey gan.

CHORUS.

Blythe, blythe, and merry was she,  
Blythe was she but and ben;  
Blythe by the banks o' Ern,  
But blyther in Glenauriglen.

By Oughtertyre grows the aik,  
On Yarrow banks, the birken shaw;  
But Phemie was a bonnier lass  
Than brags o' Yarrow ever saw.  
Blythe, &c.

\* These verses were composed shortly after the Poet's marriage, and are in imitation of an old ballad.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,  
Her smile was like a simmer morn;  
She tripped by the banks o' Ern,  
As light's a bird upon a thorn.  
Blythe, &c.

Her bonnie face it was as meek  
As onie lamb's upon a lee;  
The evening sun was na'er so sweet  
As was the blink o' Phemie's ee.  
Blythe, &c.

The Highland hills, I've wander'd wide,  
And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;  
But Phemie was the blythest lass  
That ever trod the dewy green.  
Blythe, &c.

THE

### BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

TUNE—The blabrie o't.

I.

I GAVE a waifu' gae yeareen,  
A gae, I fear, I'll dearly rue;  
I gat my deat' frae twa sweet een,  
Twa lovely een a' bonnie blue.  
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright,  
Her lips like roses wat wi' dew,  
Her heaving bosom, bly-white—  
It was her een aye bonnie blue.

II.

SHE talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wyl'd,  
She charm'd my soul I wia na how;  
And aye the sound, the deadly wound,  
Cam frae her een aye bonnie blue.  
But spere to speak, and spere to spend;  
She'll aibides listen to my vow;  
Should she refuse, I'll lay my deat'  
To her twa een aye bonnie blue.

THE

### GALLANT WEAVER.

TUNE—The saild wife ayon the fir.

WHAES Cart rinns rowin to the sea,  
By many a flow'r and spreading tree,  
There lives a lad, the lad for me,  
He is a gallant weaver.



Oh, I had wooven aught or nine,  
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;  
And I was fear'd my heart would tane,  
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,  
To gie the lad that has the land,  
But to my heart I'll add my hand,  
And gie it to the weaver.

While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;  
While bees rejoice in opening flowers;  
While corn grows green in simmer showers,  
I'll love my gallant weaver.\*

### A ROSE-BUD.

This song I composed on Miss Jenny Craik-shank, only child to my worthy friend, Mr. Wm. Craikshank, of the High School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, quondam merchant and schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the DAVIN to whom I address my printed poetical Epistle, in the measure of "The Cherry and the Slae."

Tune—The shepherd's wife.

A rose-bud by my early walk,  
Adown a corn-inclined hawk,  
Sae gently bent his thorny stalk,  
All on a dewy morning.

Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,  
In a' its crimson glory spread,  
And drooping rich the dewy head,  
It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest,  
A little linnet fondly prest,  
The dew sat chilly on her breast,  
Sae early in the morning.

She soon shall see her tender brood,  
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,  
Among the fresh green leavers bedew'd,  
Awake the early morning.

So then, dear bird, young Jenny fair,  
On trembling wing or vocal air,  
Shall sweetly pay the tender care  
That tems thy early morning.

So then, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,  
Shall beauteous blaze upon the day,  
And bless the parent's evening ray.  
That watch'd thy early morning.

\* In some editions "sailor" is substituted for "weaver."

### PEGGY'S CHARMS.

This song I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh.

Tune—Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercainy.

#### I.

Where braving angry winter's storms,  
The lofty Ochils rise,  
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms  
First bless my wandering eyes.  
As one, who by some savage stream,  
A lonely gem surveys,  
Amazon'd doubly marks his beam  
With art's most polish'd blaze.

#### II.

Bless be the wild, sequester'd shade,  
And bless the day and hour,  
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,  
When first I felt their pow'r!  
The tyrant Death, with grim controul,  
May seize my fleeting breath;  
But tearing Peggy from my soul  
Must be a stronger death.

### THE

### BLISSFUL DAY.

I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world, Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell, and his lady. As their fire-side I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life.

Tune—Seventh of November.

#### I.

The day returns, my bosom burns,  
The blissful day we e'en did meet.  
Though winter wild in tempest toll'd,  
Ne'er summer sun was half so sweet:  
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,  
And crosses o'er the salty line;  
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,  
Heaven gave me more—it made thee mine.

## II.

While day and night can bring delight,  
Or nature ought of pleasure give!  
While joys above my mind can move,  
For thee, and thee alone, I live!  
When that grim foe of life below,  
Comes in between to make us part;  
The iron hand that breaks our band,  
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

## JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.\*

## I.

JOHN ANDERSON, my jo, John,  
When we were first acquaint,  
Your locks were like the raven,  
Your bonnie brow was bent;  
But now your brow is bald, John,  
Your locks are like the snow;  
But blessings on your frosty pow,  
John Anderson, my jo.

## II.

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
We clamb the hill thegither;  
And monie a cannie day, John,  
We've had wi' ane anither.  
Now we maun totter down, John,  
But hand in hand we'll go;  
And sleep thegither at the foot,  
John Anderson, my jo.

## THE

## BANKS OF NITH.

Tune—Robie donna Corach.

## I.

THE THAMES flows proudly to the sea,  
Where royal cities usually stand;  
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,  
Where Cambrina once had high command;  
When shall I see that honour'd land,  
That winding stream I love so dear!  
Must wayward Fortune's adverse hand  
For ever, ever keep me here?

\* This strain of delicate and tender sentiment has no accordance with the old song under the same title. That wicked, but witty production has given place to expressions of satisfied recollection, and calm resignation.

## II.

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,  
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom;  
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales  
Where lambskins wanton thro' the broom!  
Though wandering, now, must be my doom,  
Far from thy bonnie banks and braes,  
May there my latest hours consume,  
Among the friends of early days!

## THE

## COUNTRY LASSIE.

Tune—John, come, kiss me now.

## I.

It's simmer when the hay was mawn,  
And corn war'd green in ilka field,  
While clover blooms white o'er the lea,  
And roses blaw in ilka bield;  
Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel,  
Says, "I'll be wed, come o't what will!"  
Oot spak a dame in wrinkled cild,  
"O' gude advisement comes nae ill."

## II.

"It's ye hae wooten monie ane,  
And lassie, ye're but young ye ken;  
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,  
A routhie ban, a routhie ban:  
There's Johnnie o' the Bunkie-glen,  
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;  
Tak this frae me, my bonnie ban,  
It's plenty been the lover's fire."

## III.

"Far Johnnie o' the Bunkie-glen,  
I dinna care a single flie;  
He lo'es me weel his craze and kye,  
He has nae love to spare for me;  
But blythe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,  
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear;  
As blink o' him I wad na gie  
For Bunkie-glen and a' his gear."

## IV.

"O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught;  
The canniest gae, the wifie is sair;  
But aye fu' han't is fechtin' ban,  
A hungry care's an unco care.  
But some will spend, and some will spare,  
And wilfu' folk maun hae their will;  
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,  
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill."

## V.

" O, gear will buy me rig o' land,  
 And gear will buy me sheep and kye;  
 But the tender heart o' leesome love,  
 The gowd and ailler canna buy:  
 We may be poor—Robie and I,  
 Light is the burden love lays on;  
 Content and love brings peace and joy,  
 What mair has queens upon a throne?"

## MY SPINNING WHEEL.

TUNE—BONDS OF THE PUNCH BOWL.

## I.

O LEASE me on my spinning wheel,  
 O lease me on my rock and reel;  
 Free up to the that floods me hien,  
 And haps me feel and warm at e'en I  
 I'll set me down and sing and spin,  
 While laigh descends the simmer sun,  
 Bless wi' content, and milk and meal—  
 O lease on my spinning wheel.

## II.

On ilka hand the burnies crost,  
 And moss below my cheekin cot;  
 The scented birk and hawthorn white  
 Across the pool their arms unite,  
 Alike to screen the birdie's nest,  
 And hile fishes' caller rest:  
 The sun blinks kindly in the biel,  
 Where blythe I turn my spinning wheel.

## III.

On lofty alka the cushion wall,  
 And echo caws the doolfu' tale;  
 The linewings in the hazel brake,  
 Delighted, rival isher's lays:  
 The creak among the clever hay,  
 The pairick whirrle o'er the ley,  
 The swallow jinkin round my shiel,  
 Amuse me at my spinning wheel.

## IV.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,  
 Aboon distress, below envy,  
 O wha wad leave this humble state,  
 For a' the pride o' a' the great?  
 Amid their flaring, idle ways,  
 Amid their cumbersome, dunsome joys,  
 Can they the peace and pleasure feel  
 Of Bessy at her spinning wheel?

## TAM GLEN.

TUNE—The mocking o' Geordie's byre.

My heart is a-braking, dear Tixie,  
 Some counsel unto me come len',  
 To anger them a' is a pity,  
 But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fallow,  
 In poortith I might mak a fen:  
 What care I in riches to wallow,  
 If I maanna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Drumeller,  
 " Gude day to you, brude," he comes ben;  
 He brags and he blows o' his ailler,  
 But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,  
 And bid me beware o' young men:  
 They flatter, she says, to deceive me,  
 But wha can think the o' Tam Glen?

My saddle says, gin I'll forsake him,  
 He'll gie me gude hunder marks ten:  
 But if it's ordain'd I mean take him,  
 O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Ye'reen, at the Valentines' dealing,  
 My heart to my mon gied a sue;  
 For thrice I drew and without failing,  
 And thrice it was written, Tam Glen!

The lae Halloween I was wackin  
 My droukit ark-cleeve, as ye ken;  
 His likeness cam up the house waukin!  
 And the very grey broke o' Tam Glen!

Some counsel, dear Tixie, don't tarry;  
 I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,  
 Gif ye will advise me to marry  
 The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

## ANE-AND-TWENTY.

This song is mine.

TUNE—The Moodiewort.

## CHORUS.

AN O, for ane-and-twenty, Tam!  
 An hey, sweet ane-and-twenty, Tam!  
 I'll learn my kin a raulin sang,  
 An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam!

They snool me air, and hand me down,  
And gie me look like blumie, Tam!  
But three short years will soon wheel round,  
And then comes ane-and-twenty, Tam!  
An O, for, &c.

A gleib o' lan', a clout o' gear,  
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;  
At kith or kin I need na spier,  
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.  
An O, for, &c.

They'll hae me wad a wealthy roof,  
Though I mysel hae plenty, Tam;  
But hear't thou, laddie, there's my loof,  
I'm thine at ane-and-twenty, Tam!  
An O, for, &c.

### THE LASSIE O' MY HEART.

Tune—Morning.

O waa is she that lo'es me,  
And has my heart a keeping?  
O sweet is she that lo'es me,  
As dew o' summer weeping,  
In tears the rose-buds weeping.

CHORUS.

O that's the lassie o' my heart,  
My lassie ever dearer;  
O that's the queen o' woman-kind,  
And ne'er a one to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie,  
In grace and beauty charming,  
That e'en thy chosen lassie,  
Ere while thy breast are warming,  
Had ne'er the powers alarming:  
O that's, &c.

If thou hadst heard her talking,  
And thy attentions plighted,  
That ilka body talking,  
But her, by thee is slighted;  
And thou art all delighted:  
O that's, &c.

If thou hast met this fair one,  
When frae her thou hast parted;  
If every other fair one,  
But her, thou hast deserted,  
And thou art broken-hearted;—  
O that's, &c.

### BONNIE JEAN.

I'll aye ca' in by yon town,  
And by yon garden green again;  
I'll aye ca' in by yon town,  
—And see my bonnie Jean again.

There's nane call ken, there's nane call goss,  
What brings me back the gae again,  
But she, my fairst faichfu' lass,  
And now and then we all meet again.

She'll wander by the aiken tree,  
When tryin'-time draws near again;  
And when her lovely form I see,  
O haith, she's doubly dear again!

### YON TOWN.

Tune—The bonnie lass in yon town.

O, war ye wha's in yon town,\*  
Ye see the e'enin sun upon?  
The fairst dame's in yon town,  
That e'enin sun is shining on.

Now haply down yon gay green shaw,  
She wanders by yon spreading tree;  
How blest ye flow'rs that round her blow,  
Ye catch the glances o' her e'e.

How blest ye birds that round her sing,  
And welcome in the blooming year;  
And doubly welcome be the spring,  
The season to my Lucy dear.

The sun blinks blythe on yon town,  
And on yon bonnie braes o' Ayr;  
But my delight in yon town,  
And dearest bliss, is Lucy fair.

Without my love not a' the charms  
O' Paradise could yield me joy;  
But gie me Lucy in my arms,  
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky.

My cave wad be a lover's bower,  
Though raging winter rent the air;  
And she a lovely lute flower,  
That I wad rent and shelter there.

\* The subject of this song was a lady, who afterwards died at Lisbon. She was an accomplished and lovely woman, and worthy of this beautiful strain of sensibility.

O, sweet is she in yon town,  
Yon sinking sun's gone down upon;  
A fairer than's in yon town,  
His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

If angry Fate is sworn my foe,  
And suffering I am doom'd to bear;  
I careless quite aught else below,  
But spare me, spare me, Lucy dear.

For while life's dearest blood is warm,  
As thought free her shall ne'er depart,  
And she—as fairest in her form,  
She has the truest, kindest heart.

### CESSNOCK BANKS.\*

Tune—If he be a butcher neat and trim.

On Cessnock banks there lives a lass,  
Could I describe her shape and mien;  
The graces of her well-far'd face,  
And the glancin of her sparklin een.

She's fresher than the morning dawn  
When rising Phoebus first is seen,  
When dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,  
That grows the cowslip brass between,  
And shoots its head above each bush;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

She's spotless as the flow'ring thorn,  
With flow'rs as white and leaves as green,  
When purest in the dewy morn;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,  
When flow'ry May adorns the scene,  
That winnows round its bleating dam;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her hair is like the curling mist  
That shades the mountain-side at e'en,  
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,  
When shining sunbeams intervene,  
And gild the distant mountain's brow;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her voice is like the evening thrush  
That sings in Cessnock banks unseen,  
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe,  
That sunny walls from Boreas screen,  
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,  
With fleeces newly washen clean,  
That slowly moult the risings steep;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze  
That gently stirs the blossom'd tree,  
When Phoebus sinks behind the sea;  
And she's twa glancin, sparklin een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,  
Though matching beauty's fabled queen,  
But the mind that shines in ev'ry gaze,  
And chiefly in her sparklin een.

### YOUNG JOCKEY.

I.

YOUNG JOCKEY was the blithest lad  
In a' our town or bare wee;  
Fu' blithe he whistled at the gad,  
Fu' lightly danc'd he in the ha';  
He roo'd my een as bonnie blue,  
He roo'd my wain as genty ama';  
And aye my heart came to my mou,  
When ne'er a body heard or saw.

II.

My Jockey toils upon the plain,  
Thro' wind and weat, thro' frost and snaw;  
And o'er the lee I look fu' fain  
When Jockey's owen hameward ca'.  
And aye the night comes round again,  
When in his arms he takes me a'!  
And aye he vows he'll be my ain  
As lang's he has a breath to draw.

### HANDSOME NELL.

Tune—I am a man unmarried.

O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass,  
Ay, and I love her still,  
And whilst that virtue warms my breast  
I'll love my handsome Nell.  
Fal la! da! da! &c.

\* This song is an early production. It was recovered by Mr. Cromek, from the oral communication of a lady residing in Glasgow, whom the Poet in early life affectionately admired.

As bonnie ladies I hae seen,  
And mony fall as braw,  
But for a modest gracefu' mien  
The like I never saw.

A bonnie lass I will confess,  
Is pleasant to the e'e,  
But without some better qualities  
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,  
And what is best o' a',  
Her reputation is complete,  
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses aye as clean and neat,  
Both decent and genicel:  
And then there's something in her gait  
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air  
May slightly touch the heart,  
But it's innocence and modesty  
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,  
'Tis this enchants my soul;  
For absolutely in my breast  
She reigns without controul.  
Fad la! de ral, &c.\*

### TO A LADY.

This song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Mary and Anne, queens of Scotland. The poem is to be found in James Watson's *Collection of Scots Poems*. I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments, by giving them a Scots dress.

I do confess thou art as fair,  
I wad been o'er the lug in love;  
Had I na found the slightest prayer  
That lips could speak, thy heart could move.

I do confess thee sweet, but find  
Thou art as thriftless o' thy sweets,  
Thy favours are the silly wind  
That kins ilka thing it meets.

See yonder rose-bud, rich in dew,  
Among its native briars as coy,  
How soon it dies in scent and hue  
When pu'd and worn a common toy!

\* This was the first attempt of the Poet.

Sic fate ere lang shall thee beside;  
Though thou may gaily bloom a while,  
Yet soon thou shalt be thrown aside,  
Like ony common weed and vile.

### SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.

#### I.

Sun's fair and fause that causes my smart,  
I lo'd her meikle and lang;  
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,  
And I may e'en gas hang.  
A coof cam in wi' routh o' gear,  
And I hae tint my dearest dear;  
But woman is but world's gear,  
Sae let the bonnie lass gang.

#### II.

Wha'er ye be that woman love,  
To this be never blind,  
Nae ferlie 'tis though fickle she prove,  
A woman hae't by kind:  
O woman, lovely woman, fair!  
An angel form't leant to thy share,  
'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair,  
I mean an angel mind.

#### THE

### FAITHFUL HEART.

Swearst thou May, let love inspire thee;  
Take a heart which he designs thee;  
As thy constant slave regard it!  
For its faith and truth reward it.

Proof o' shot to birth or money,  
Not the wealthy, but the bonny;  
Not high-born, but noble-minded,  
In love's silken band can bind it!

### FRAGMENT.

Hae flowing locks, the raven's wing,  
Adown her neck and bosom hing;  
How sweet onto that breast to cling,  
And round that neck entwining her!

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,  
O what a feast her bonnie mou!  
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,  
A crimson still divinest!

## THE

## FIVE CARLINS.

## AN ELECTION BALLAD.

TUNE—Chevy Chase.

THERE were five Carlins in the south,  
They fell upon a scheme,  
To send a lad to Lon'on town  
To bring us tidings hame.

Not only bring us tidings hame  
But do our errands there,  
And sibbings gowd and homour baith  
Might be that laddie's share.

There was Maggie by the banks o' Nith,\*  
A dame wi' pride enough;  
And Marjorie o' the moony Loch,†  
A Carlin seld and tough.

And blinkin Bess o' Annandale‡  
That dwells near Solway side,  
And Whisky Jean that took her gill,§  
In Galloway so wide.

And seld black Joan frae Creighton peel,||  
O' gipsy kin and kin,  
Five weightier Carlins were na found  
The South kintre within.

To send a lad to Lon'on town,  
They met upon a day,  
And monie a Knight and monie a Laird  
That errand fain wad gae.

O monie a Knight and monie a Laird  
This errand fain wad gae,  
But nae one could their fancy please,  
O ne'er a one but twae.

The first one was a belted Knight,  
Bred o' a border hand,  
And he wad gae to Lon'on town,  
Might nae man him withstand.

And he wad do their errand weel,  
And meikle he wad say,  
And like one at Lon'on court  
Wad bid to him gude day.

\* Dumfries.

† Lochmaben.

‡ Anna.

§ Kirkcudbright.

|| Sanquhar.

There first cam in a Soder youth,  
And spak wi' modest grace,  
And he wad gae to Lon'on town,  
If nae their pleasure was.

He wad na hecht them courtly gift,  
Nor meikle speech pretend;  
But he wad hecht an honest heart  
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

Now whom to choose and whom refuse,  
To write thae Carlins tell;  
For some had gentle folk to please,  
And some wad please themsel.

Then out spak mair-mou'd Meg o' Nith,  
And she spak out wi' pride,  
And she wad send the Soder youth,  
Wherever might beside.

For the seld gudeman o' Lon'on court  
She did na care a pin,  
But she wad send the Soder youth  
To greet his eldest son.

Then up sprang Bess o' Annandale,  
A deadly aith she's ta'en,  
That she wad vote the border Knight,  
Though she should vote her lane.

For far-off fowls hae feathers fair,  
And fools o' change are fain;  
But I hae tried the border Knight,  
I'll try him yet again.

Says black Joan frae Creighton peel,  
A Carlin stout and grim,  
The seld gudeman or young gudeman,  
For me may sink or swim.

For fools may prate o' right and wrong,  
While knaves laugh them to scorn;  
But the Soder's friends hae blown the horn,  
See he shall bear the horn.

Then Whisky Jean spak o'er her drink,  
Ye weel ken, kimmers a',  
The seld gudeman o' Lon'on court,  
His back's been at the we'.

And monie a friend that kin'd his caup  
Is now a fraemmit wigh;  
But it's ne'er we wi' Whisky Jean,  
We'll send the border Knight.

Then slow rais'd Marjorie o' the Loch,  
And wrinkled was her brow;  
Her ancient weel was rais'd grey,  
Her seld Scots heart was true.

There's some great folks set light by me,  
 I set as lights by them;  
 But I will send to Lan'ron town  
 Wha I lo'e best at hame.

So how this weighty plea will end,  
 Nae mortal wight can tell;  
 God grant the King and like man  
 May look weel to himsel.

## BONNIE BELL.

### I.

THE smiling spring comes in rejoicing,  
 And early winter grimly flies;  
 Now crystal clear are the falling waters,  
 And bonnie blue are the sunny skies;  
 Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the  
 morning,  
 The evening gilds the ocean's swell;  
 All treasures joy in the sun's returning,  
 And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

### II.

THE flow'ry spring leads sunny summer,  
 And yellow autumn presses near,  
 Then in his turn comes gloomy winter,  
 Till smiling spring again appear.  
 Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,  
 Old time and nature their changes tell,  
 But never ranging, will unchanging,  
 I adore my bonnie Bell.

## YOUNG PEGGY.\*

TUNE—LAN time I came o'er the muir.

### I.

YOUNG PEGGY blooms our bonniest lass,  
 Her blush is like the morning,  
 The rosy dawn, the springing grass,  
 With early gems adorning;  
 Her eyes combine the radiant beams  
 That gild the passing shower,  
 And glimmer o'er the crystal streams,  
 And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

### II.

Her lips more than the cherries bright,  
 A richer dye has grac'd them,  
 They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,  
 And sweetly tempt to taste them:

\* This is one of the Poet's earliest compositions.

Her smile is as the evening mild,  
 When feather'd pairs are courting,  
 And little lambkins wannon wild,  
 In playful bands disporting.

### III.

WERE Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,  
 Such sweetness would relent her,  
 As blooming Spring unbends the brow  
 Of early, savage Winter.  
 Detraction's eye no aim can gain  
 Her winning powers to lessen;  
 And fretful envy grins in vain,  
 The poison'd tooth to fester.

### IV.

YE Pow'rs of Honour, Love, and Truth,  
 From ev'ry ill defend her;  
 Inspire the highly favour'd youth  
 The destinies intend her;  
 Still fan the sweet connubial flame  
 Responsive in each bosom;  
 And bless the dear parental name  
 With many a filial blossom.

## THE

## BANK OF FLOWERS.

TUNE—On a bank of flowers.

ON a bank of flowers, in a summer day,  
 For summer lightly dress'd,  
 The youthful blooming Nelly lay,  
 With love and sleep oppress'd.

When Willie, wand'ring through the wood,  
 Who for her favour oft had woo'd;  
 He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,  
 And trembled where he stood.

Her closed eyes, like weapons sheath'd,  
 Were seal'd in soft repose;  
 Her lips, still as the fragrant breath'd,  
 In richer dy'd the rose.

The springing lilies sweetly press,  
 Wild, wannon kiss'd her rival breast;  
 He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,  
 His bosom ill at rest.

Her robes, light waving in the breeze,  
 Her tender limbs embrace;  
 Her lovely form, her native ease,  
 All harmony and grace!



Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,  
A faltering ardor kiss his soul;  
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,  
And sigh'd his very soul.

As flies the partridge from the brake,  
On fear-inspired wings;  
So Nelly starting, half awake,  
Away affrighted springs:

But Willie follow'd—as he should,  
He overtook her in the wood:  
He vow'd, he pray'd, he found the maid  
Forgiving all, and good.

## THE

## BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

TUNE—Miss Forbes's farewell to Banff.

## I.

THE Cairne woods were yellow seen,  
The flowers decay'd on Cairne lee,  
Nae lark sang on hillock green,  
But nature sickn'd on the lee.  
Through faded groves Maria sang,  
Herself in beauty's bloom the while,  
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,  
Farewell the braes o' Ballochmyle!

## II.

Low in your wistry beds, ye flowers,  
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;  
Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,  
Again ye'll charm the vocal air.  
But here, alas! for me nae mair,  
Shall birdie charm or flow'ret smile;  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr,  
Farewell, farewell! sweet Ballochmyle!

## THE

## LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

## I.

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,  
On every blade the pearls hang;  
The zephyr wafted round the beam,  
And bore its fragrant sweets along;  
In every glen the mavis sang,  
All nature listening seem'd the while,  
Except where greenwood echoes rang,  
Among the braes o' Ballochmyle.

## II.

With careless step I onward stray'd,  
My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,  
When, musing in a lonely glade,  
A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy:  
Her look was like the morning's eye,  
Her air like nature's vernal smile,  
Perfection whisper'd passing by,  
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!

## III.

Fair is the morn in flowery May,  
And sweet is night in Autumn mild;  
When roving through the garden gay,  
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild;  
But woman, Nature's darling child!  
There all her charms she does compile;  
Even there her other works are foil'd  
By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

## IV.

O had she been a country maid,  
And I the happy country swain!  
Though shelter'd in the lowest shed  
That ever rose on Scotland's plain;  
Through weary winter's wind and rain,  
With joy and raptures I would toil,  
And nightly to my bosom strain  
The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

## V.

Then pride might climb the slippery steep,  
Where fame and honours lofty shine;  
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,  
Or downward seek the Indian mine;  
Give me the cot below the pine,  
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,  
And every day have joys divine,  
With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

## FRAGMENT.

TUNE—I had a horse, I had nae mair.

WHEN first I came to Seewart Kyle,  
My mind it was na steady,  
Where'er I gae'd, where'er I rode  
A mistress still I had eye:

But when I came round by Mauchline town,  
Not dreading ony body,  
My heart was caught before I thought,  
And by a Mauchline lady.

## MAGGIE.

TUNE—Whistle o'er the lave o't.

Fear when Maggy was my care,  
Heaven, I thought, was in her air;  
Now we're married—spier nae mair—  
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,  
Bonnie Meg was nature's child—  
Wiser men than me's beguil'd;  
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

How we live, my Meg and me,  
How we love and how we 'gree,  
I care na by how few may see;  
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

Wha I wish were maggins' meat,  
Dish'd up in her winding sheet,  
I could write—but Meg mair see't—  
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

## WILLIE'S WIFE.

TUNE—Tibbie Fowler in the glen.

## I.

WILLIE WAITLE dwelt on Tweed,  
The spot they ca'd it Linkmaddie;  
Willie was a wabster gude,  
Cou'd stow a clue wi' oaul bodie;  
He had a wife was dour and din,  
O, tinkler Maggie was her mither;  
Sic a wife as Willie had,  
I wad na gie a button for her.

## II.

She has an e'e, she has but ane,  
The cat has twa the very colour;  
Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,  
A clipper tongue wad dawe a miller;  
A whistlin heard about her mou,  
Her nose and chin they threatenither;  
Sic a wife as Willie had,  
I wad na gie a button for her.

## III.

She's bough-bough'd, she's hein-shinn'd,  
Ae limpin leg a hand-breed shorter;  
She's twisted right, she's twisted left,  
To balance fair in lika quarter;  
She has a hump upon her breast,  
The twin o' that upon her shoulder;  
Sic a wife as Willie had,  
I wad na gie a button for her.

## IV.

Auld bawdrans by the ingle sin,  
And wi' her loof her face a-washin;  
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,  
She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion;  
Her walee nieves like midden-creech,  
Her face wad fyie the Logan water;  
Sic a wife as Willie had,  
I wad na gie a button for her.

## SHE DANG ME.

O AYE my wife she dang me,  
And aft my wife she bang'd me;  
If ye gie a woman a' her will,  
Gude faith she'll soon o'erbang ye.

On peace and rest my mind was bent,  
And fool I was I marry'd;  
But never honest man's intent  
As curiously miscarry'd.

Some salrie comfort still at last,  
When a' thir days are done, man;  
My pains o' hell on earth is past,  
I'm sure o' blis aboon, man.  
O aye my wife, &c.

## MY BOWER DOOR.\*

This song is also known by the name of  
"Lass, an I come near thee." The words  
are mine.

## I.

What is that at my bower door?  
O wha is it but Findlay;  
Then gie your gate, ye're nae be here;  
Indeed mair I, quo' Findlay.  
What mak ye see like a thief?  
O come and see, quo' Findlay;  
Before the morn ye'll work mischief;  
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

## II.

Gif I rise and let you in—  
Let me in, quo' Findlay;  
Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din;  
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

\* This song was suggested by the "Auld  
Man's Address to the Widow," printed in  
Allan Ramsay's "Tea Table Miscellany."

In my bower if ye should say—  
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;  
I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;  
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

## III.

Here this night if ye remain—  
I'll remain, quo' Findlay;  
I dread ye'll leave the gate again;  
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.  
What may pass within this bower—  
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;  
Ye mair conceal till your last hour;  
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

## THE

## BONNIE LAD.

O now can I be blythe and glad,  
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,  
When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best  
Is o'er the hills and far awa?

It's no the frosty winter wind,  
It's no the driving drift and snow;  
But aye the star comes in my e'e,  
To think o' him that's far awa.

My father put me frae his door,  
My friends they ha'e disown'd me a';  
But I ha'e aye will tak my part,  
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

A pair o' gloves he gave to me,  
And silken smock he gave me twa;  
And I will wear them for his sake,  
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

The weary winter soon will pass,  
And spring will clead the birken-shaw;  
And my sweet babe will be born,  
And he'll come hame that's far awa.

## FAIR ELIZA.

TEXT.—The bonnie bracket lassie,

## I.

TURN again, thou fair Eliza,  
As kind blink before we part,  
Sew on thy despairing lover!  
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart?

TURN again, thou fair Eliza;  
If to love thy heart denies,  
For pity hide the cruel sentence  
Under friendship's kind disguise!

## II.

THEE, dear maid, ha'e I offended?  
The offence is loving thee;  
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,  
Who for thine was gladly die?  
While the life beats in my bosom,  
Thou shalt mix in ilka thro':  
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,  
As sweet smile on me bestow.

## III.

NOT the bee upon the blossom,  
In the pride o' sunny noon;  
Not the little sporting fairy,  
All beneath the summer moon;  
Not the poet in the moment  
Fancy lighens in his e'e,  
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture  
That thy presence gies to me.

## FARE THEE WEE.

## I.

AS fond kiss, and then we sever;  
As farewell, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.  
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him  
While the star of hope she leaves him?  
No, no cheerfu' twinkles light me;  
Dark despair around benights me.

## II.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,  
Nothing could seduce my Nancy;  
But to see her, was to love her;  
Love but her, and love for ever!  
Had we never lov'd so kindly,  
Had we never lov'd so blindly,  
Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

## III.

FARE thee weel, thou first and fairest!  
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!  
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!  
As fond kiss, and then we sever;  
As farewell, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

THE  
BANKS O' DOON.

TUNE—The Caledonian Hunt's delight.

I.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,  
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;  
How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
And I see weary, fu' o' care!  
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,  
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn;  
Thou minds me o' departed joys,  
Departed never to return.

II.

Off hae I ro'd by bonnie Doon,  
To see the rose and woodbine twine;  
And like bird sang o' its love,  
And fondly see did I o' mine.  
Wi' lighsome heart I pu'd a rose,  
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;  
And my fause lover stole my rose,  
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

MY JEAN.

THOUGH cruel Fate should bid us part,  
Far as the pole and line;  
Her dear idea round my heart  
Should tenderly entwine.

Though mountains frown and deserts howl,  
And oceans roar between;  
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,  
I still would love my Jean.

FRAGMENT.

TUNE—Gallawater.

Altho' my bed were in yon moor,  
Among the heather, in my plaidie,  
Yet happy, happy would I be,  
Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat early storms,  
And winter nights were dark and rainy;  
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms  
I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

Were I a Baron proud and high,  
And horse and servants waiting ready,  
Then a' twad gie o' joy to me,  
The charin't with Montgomerie's Peggy.

ANNA.

I think this is the best love-song I ever composed.

TUNE—Banks of Anna.

I.

YESTEREN I had a pint o' wine,  
A place where body saw na;  
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine,  
The raven locks o' Anna.  
The hungry Jew in wilderness  
Rejoicing o'er his manna,  
Was nathing to my honey bliss  
Upon the lips o' Anna.

II.

Ye monarchs tak the east and west,  
Frae Indus to Savannah!  
Gie me within my sustaining grasp  
The melting form o' Anna.  
Then I'll despise imperial charms,  
An Empress or Sultana,  
While dying raptures in her arms  
I give and take with Anna.

III.

Awa then flouting god o' day!  
Awa then pale Deana!  
Ilk star gae hâde thy twinkling ray  
When I'm to meet my Anna!  
Come, in thy raven plumage, night,  
Sun, moon, and stars withdraw a'!  
And bring an angel pen to write  
My transports wi' my Anna!

POSTSCRIPT.\*

IV.

The kirk and state may join, and tell  
To do such things I mauna;  
The kirk and state may gae to hell!  
And I'll gae to my Anna.  
She is the sunshine o' my e'e,  
To live but her I canna;  
Had I on earth but wishes three,  
The first should be my Anna.

\* This stanza is omitted in some editions.

## ON THE

## BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR.\*

TUNE—The Cameronian rans.

## I.

"O cam ye here the fight to shoon,  
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?  
Or were ye at the Sherra-muir,  
And did the battle see, man?"  
I saw the battle, sair and tough,  
And reekin-red ran mony a through,  
My heart, for fear, gae tough for tough,  
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds,  
O' clans frae woods, in terran duds,  
Wha glaim'd at kingdoms three, man.

## II.

The red-coat lads wi' black cockades  
To meet them were na slow, man;  
They rush'd and push'd, and blude out-  
gush'd,  
And mony a bonk did fa', man;  
The great Argyle led on his files,  
I wat they glanced twenty miles;  
They hack'd and hack'd, while broad-swords  
clash'd,  
And through they dash'd, and hew'd and  
smash'd,  
Till fey men died awa, man.

## III.

But had you seen the philibegs,  
And skyrin terran trows, man,  
When in the troth they dar'd our whigs,  
And Covenant true blues, man;

\* The battle of Dumblane or Sheriff-muir, was fought on the 13th of November, 1715, between the Earl of Mar, for the Chevalier, and the Duke of Argyll, for the Government. Both sides claimed the victory, the left wing of each army being routed. This battle has also been celebrated in a dialogue, printed in Rimes's Collection of Scottish Songs, and in the ballad of "We ran and they ran," by the Rev. Murdoch McLennan. They have little other merit than that of being circumstantial. Burns, however, has invented the subject with the riches of his own genius; and displayed anew the versatility of his powers in re-modelling the ancient ballads of his country. It was written about the time he made his tour to the Highlands, 1787.

In lines extended lang and large,  
When bayonets oppos'd the surge,  
And thousands hasten'd to the charge,  
Wi' Highland wrath they frae the thrash  
Drew blades o' death, till, out o' breath,  
They fled like frighted doon, man.

## IV.

"O how dail, Tam, can that be true?  
The chase gae frae the north, man;  
I saw myself, they did pursue  
The horsemen back to Forth, man;  
And at Dumblane, in my ain sight,  
They took the brig wi' a' their might,  
And strought to Scirling wing'd their flight;  
But, curst lot! the gates were shut,  
And mony a humie, poor red-coat,  
For fear amain did swart, man."

## V.

My sister Kate cam up the gae  
Wi' crowdie unto me, man;  
She swore she saw some rebels run  
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man;  
Their left-hand general had nae skill,  
The Angus lads had nae good will  
That day their neighbors' blood to spill;  
For fear, by foes, that they should lose  
Their cogn o' brose; all crying woe,  
And so it goes, you see, man.

## VI.

They've lost some gallant gentlemen,  
Among the Highland clans, man;  
I fear my lord Penmuir is slain,  
Or fallen in whiggish hands, man;  
Now wad ye sing this double fight,  
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;  
But mony bade the world gude-night;  
Then ye may tell, how yell and mell,  
By red claymores, and muskets' knell,  
Wi' dying yell, the Tories fell,  
And Whigs to hell did flee, man.

## MARY.

Could aught of song declare my pains,  
Could arifal numbers move thee,  
The Muse should tell, in labour'd strains,  
O Mary, how I love thee!

They who but feign a wounded heart,  
May teach the lyre to languish;  
But what avails the pride of art,  
When waxes the soul with anguish?

Then let the sudden burning sigh  
The heart-felt pang discover;  
And in the keen, yet tender eye,  
O read th' imploring lover.

For well I know thy gentle mind  
Disdains art's gay disguising;  
Beyond what fancy e'er refin'd,  
The voice of nature prizing.

### I'M O'ER YOUNG.

The chorus of this song is old—the rest of  
it, such as it is, is mine.\*

I AM my mammy's ae bairn,  
Wi' unco folk I weary, Sir;  
And lying in a man's bed,  
I'm flay'd wad mak me eerie, Sir.

#### CHORUS.

I'm o'er young, I'm o'er young,  
I'm o'er young to marry yet;  
I'm o'er young, 'twad be a sin  
To take me frae my mammy yet.

Hallowmas is come and gane,  
The nights are lang in winter, Sir;  
And you and I in ae bed,  
In trowth, I dare na venture, Sir.  
I'm o'er young, &c.

Fu' loud and still the frosty wind  
Blaws through the leafless timber, Sir;  
But if ye come this gate again,  
I'll aulder be gin simmer, Sir.  
I'm o'er young, &c.

### ROB MOSSGIEL.

O LEAVE novels, ye Mauchline belles,  
Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel;  
Such witching books, are baited hooks  
For rakish rooks, like Rob Moss-giel.

\* There is a stray characteristic verse which  
ought to be preserved—

My minnie coft me a new gown,  
The kirk man has the gracing o't;  
Were I to lie wi' you, kind Sir,  
I'm fear'd ye'd spoil the facing o't.  
I'm o'er young, &c.

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,  
They make your youthful fancies reel,  
They heat your brains, and fire your veins,  
And then you're prey for Rob Moss-giel.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung;  
A heart that warmly seems to feel;  
That feeling heart but acts a part,  
'Tis rakish art in Rob Moss-giel.

The frank address, the soft caress,  
Are worse than poison'd darts of steel,  
The frank address, and politesse,  
Are all finess in Rob Moss-giel.

### FRAGMENT.

O RAGING fortune's withering blast  
Has laid my leaf full low! O  
O raging fortune's withering blast  
Has laid my leaf full low! O.

My stem was fair, my bud was green,  
My blossom sweet did blow; O  
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,  
And made my branches grow; O.

But luckless fortune's northern norms  
Laid a' my blossoms low, O  
But luckless fortune's northern norms  
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

### THE LAZY MIST.

This song is mine.

LEAVE ARE—Coolen.

#### I.

THE lazy mist hangs from the brow of the  
hill,  
Concealing the course of the dark-winding  
rill,  
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly,  
appear,  
As autumn to winter resigns the pale year.  
The forests are leafless, the meadows are  
brown,  
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown;  
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,  
How quick time is flying, how keen fate  
purveys.

## II.

How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd  
in vain;  
How little of life's scanty span may remain;  
What aspects, old Time, in his progress, has  
worn;  
What dies cruel Fate in my bosom has torn.  
How foolish, or worse, 'till our summit is  
gain'd!  
And downward, how weaken'd, how dark-  
en'd, how pain'd!  
This life's not worth having with all it can  
give,  
For something beyond it poor man sure must  
live.

## THE

## DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.\*

Tune—Push about the Jorum.

ARMS, 1793.

## I.

Does haughty Gaul invasion threaten?  
Then let the loon beware, Sir,  
There's wooden walls upon our seas,  
And volunteers on shore, Sir,  
The Nith shall run to Corrincon,†  
And Criffel sink in Solway,‡  
Ere we permit a foreign foe  
On British ground to rally!  
Fall de rail, &c.

## II.

O let us not like snarling tykes  
In wrangling be divided;  
Till slap come in an unco loon  
And wi' a rung decide it.  
Be Britain still to Britain true,  
Among ourselves united;  
For never but by British hands  
Mann British wrongs be righted.  
Fall de rail, &c.

\* Burns was a member of this corps. He composed these verses to stimulate their patriotism; for though he deplored the corruptions in the administration of government at home, he was unwilling to exchange even them for foreign domination.

† A high hill at the source of the Nith.

‡ A mountain at the mouth of the same river.

## III.

The kettle o' the kirk and steeple,  
Perhaps a clasp may fall in't;  
But deil a foreign tinkler loon  
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.  
Our father's blade the kettle bought,  
And wha wad dare to spoil it,  
By heaven the sacrilegious dog  
Shall feel he's to feel it.  
Fall de rail, &c.

## IV.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,  
And the wretch his true-born brother,  
Who would set the mob aboon the throne,  
May they be damn'd together!  
Who will not sing, "God save the King,"  
Shall hang as high's the steeple;  
But while we sing, "God save the King,"  
We'll ne'er forget the People.  
Fall de rail, &c.

## A

## MOTHER'S LAMENT

FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.

Tune—Finlayson House.

This most beautiful tune is, I think, the happiest composition of that hard-born genius, John Riddell, of the family of Glencarnock, at Ayr. The words were composed to commemorate the much lamented and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq. jun. of Craigdarroch.

## I.

Fare gave the word, the arrow sped,  
And pierc'd my darling's heart:  
And with him all the joys are fled  
Life can to me impart.  
By cruel hands the sapling drops,  
In dust dishonour'd laid:  
So fell the pride of all my hopes,  
My age's future shade.

## II.

The mother-linner in the brake  
Bewails her reviv'd young;  
So I, for my lost darling's sake,  
Lament the live-day long.  
Death, aft' I've fear'd thy fatal blow,  
Now, fond I bare my breast,  
O, do thou kindly lay me low  
With him I love, at rest!

THE  
BONNIE LASS.

"The Bonnie Lass made the bed to me,"  
was composed on an amour of Charles II.  
when sculking in the North, about Aber-  
deen, in the time of the usurpation. He  
formed one pettie affaire with a daughter of  
the House of Fort-enthum, who was the lass  
that made the bed for him. Two verses of it  
are—

I kin'd her lips ane rosy red,  
While the tear wood blinkin in her e'e;  
I said, My lassie, dinna cry,  
For ye aye shall mak the bed to me.

She took her mither's winding-sheet,  
And o't she made a sark to me;  
Blythe and merry may she be,  
The lass that made the bed to me.

When Januar winds were blawing cauld,  
As to the north I bent my way,  
The darksome night did me enfold,  
I kend na where to lodge till day:

By my good luck a lass I met,  
Just in the middle o' my care,  
And kindly she did me invite,  
To walk into a chamber fair.

I bow'd fa' low unto this maid,  
And thank'd her for her courtesie;  
I bow'd fa' low unto this maid,  
And bade her make a bed for me:

She made the bed both large and wide,  
Wi' twa white hands she spread it down;  
She put the cap to her rosy lips,  
And drank, "Young man, now sleep ye  
sound."

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,  
And frae my chamber went wi' speed;  
But I call'd her quickly back again,  
To lay some mair below my head.

A cod she laid below my head,  
And served me wi' due respect;  
And to salute her wi' a kiss,  
I put my arms about her neck.

"Hand off your hands, young man," she says,  
"And dinna see uncivil be;  
Gif ye hae any love for me,  
O wrang na my virginity!"

Her hair was like the links o' gowd,  
Her teeth were like the ivory,  
Her cheeks like lilies dips in wine,  
The lass that made the bed to me.

Her bosom was the driven snow,  
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see,  
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,  
The lass that made the bed to me.

I kin'd her o'er and o'er again,  
And aye she wist na what to say;  
I laid her 'twixen me and the wa',  
The lassie thought na lang till day.

Upon the morrow when we rose,  
I thank'd her for her courtesie;  
But aye she blush'd, and aye she sigh'd,  
"Alas! young man, ye've ruin'd me."

I clasp'd her waist, and kin'd her aye,  
While the tear wood twinklin in her e'e;  
I said, "My lassie, dinna cry,  
For ye aye shall make the bed to me."

She took her mither's Holland sheets,  
And made them a' in sarks to me;  
Blythe and merry may she be,  
The lass that made the bed to me;

The bonnie lass made the bed to me,  
The braw lass made the bed to me,  
I'll ne'er forsake, till the day that I die,  
The lass that made the bed to me.

## HERE'S A HEALTH.

### I.

Here's a health to them that's awa;  
And here's to them that's awa;  
And wha wins wi' good luck to our cause,  
May never good luck be their fa'.  
It's good to be merry and wine,  
It's good to be honest and true,  
It's good to support Caledonia's cause  
And bide by the buff and the blue.

### II.

Here's a health to them that's awa;  
And here's to them that's awa;  
Here's a health to Charlie,\* the chief o' the  
clan,  
Although that his hand be but sma'.  
May liberty meet wi' success;  
May Prudence protect her free will;  
May tyrants and tyranny die in the mist,  
And wander the road to the devil.

\* Mr. Fox.



## III.

Here's a health to them that's awa;  
 And here's to them that's awa;  
 Here's a health to Tammoie \* the Norlan'  
 laddie,  
 That lives at the lug o' the law.  
 Here's freedom to him that would read,  
 And freedom to him that would write;  
 There's nae ever fear'd that the truth  
 should be heard,  
 But they whom the truth would indite.

## IV.

Here's a health to them that's awa;  
 And here's to them that's awa;  
 Here's Maitland and Wycombe, an' wha does  
 na like 'em  
 Be built in a hole o' the wa'.  
 Here's simmer that's red at the heart;  
 Here's fruit that's sound at the core;  
 May be that would turn the buff and blue  
 coat  
 Be turn'd to the back o' the door.

## V.

Here's a health to them that's awa;  
 And here's to them that's awa;  
 Here's chieftain M'Leod, a chieftain worth  
 gowd,  
 Though bred among mountains o' snaw.  
 Here's friends on both sides o' the Forth,  
 And friends on both sides o' the Tweed,  
 And wha would betray old Albion's rights,  
 May they never eat of her bread.

## PEGGY ALISON.

TUNE—Bess of Balgahidder.

## CHORUS.

I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
 And I'll kiss thee o'er again,  
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
 My bonnie Peggy Alison!

Let care and fear when thou art near,  
 I ever mair defy them, O!  
 Young kings upon their haniel throne  
 Are nae as blest as I am, O!  
 I'll kiss thee, &c.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,  
 I clasp my countless treasure, O!  
 I seek nae mair o' heaven to share,  
 Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!  
 I'll kiss thee, &c.

\* Mr. Erskine.

And by thy een, see bonnie blue,  
 I swear I'm thine for ever, O!  
 And on thy lips I seal my vow,  
 And break it shall I never, O!  
 I'll kiss thee, &c.

## THE

## DEAN OF FACULTY.

## A NEW BALLAD.

TUNE—The Dragon of Wansley.

## I.

Drax was the base at old Harlaw,  
 That Scot to Scot did carry;  
 And dire the discord Langside saw,  
 For hapless Mary;  
 But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,  
 Or were more in fury seen, Sir,  
 Than 'twixt Hal and Bob for the famous job  
 Who should be Faculty's Dean, Sir.

## II.

This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,  
 Among the first was number'd;  
 But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,  
 Commandment teach remember'd.  
 Yet simple Bob the victory got,  
 And won his heart's desire;  
 Which shows that heaven can boil the pot,  
 Though the devil play'd in the fire.

## III.

Squire Hal besides had, in this case,  
 Pretensions rather brassy,  
 For talents to deserve a place  
 Are qualifications waxy;  
 So their worship of the Faculty,  
 Quite sick of merit's rudeness,  
 Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,  
 To their grain grace and goodness.

## IV.

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight  
 Of a son of Circumcision,  
 So may be, on this Pisgah height,  
 Bob's purblind, mental vision;  
 Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet,  
 Till for eloquence you hail him,  
 And swear he has the Angel met  
 That met the Ass of Balaam.

THE  
HIGHLAND LASSIE.

This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was at all known in the world. My Highland Lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of autumn following, she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she scarce landed, when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness.

TUNE—The druck's dang o'er my daddy.

Nae gentle dames, though e'er so fair,  
Shall ever be my Moss's care;  
Their titles a' are empty show;  
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

CHORUS.

Within the glen see bushy, O,  
Aboon the plain see rushy, O,  
I set me down wi' right good will,  
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

O were you hill and valley mine,  
You palace and you garden fine;  
The world then the love should know  
I bear my Highland lassie, O.  
Within the glen, &c.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,  
And I maun cross the raging sea;  
But while my crimson currents flow,  
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.  
Within the glen, &c.

Although thro' foreign climes I range,  
I know her heart will never change,  
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,  
My faithful Highland lassie, O.  
Within the glen, &c.

For her I'll dare the billows' roar,  
For her I'll trace a distant shore,  
That Indian wealth may laurels throw  
Around my Highland lassie, O.  
Within the glen, &c.

She has my heart, she has my hand,  
By sacred truth and honour's band!  
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,  
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Farewell the glen see bushy, O,  
Farewell the plain see rushy, O,  
To other lands I now must go  
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

TO

MARY IN HEAVEN.\*

TUNE—Miss Forbes's farewell to Banff.

I.

TUNE—Sighing ear, with list'ning ray,  
That lov'd to greet the early morn,  
Again thou utter'st in the day  
My Mary from my soul wistorn.  
O Mary! dear departed shade!  
Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?

Hear'st thou the groans that rend his  
breast?

II.

That sacred hour can I forget,  
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,  
Where by the winding Ayr we met,  
To live one day of parting love!  
Eternity will not efface  
Those records dear of transports past;  
Thy image at our last embrace!

Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

III.

Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,  
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning,  
green:  
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,  
Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene.  
The flowers sprang wistful to be prest,  
The birds sang love on every spray,  
Till see, too soon, the glowing west  
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

\* The Impression which this interesting female made on the mind of Burns seems to have been deep and lasting. Several years afterwards, when he was removed to Niddale, he gave vent to the sensibility of his recollections in this impassioned hymn. The exquisite strain, entitled "Highland Mary," relates to the same attachment. See his Letters to George Thomson, No. IV.

## IV.

Sill o'er these scenes my mountry wakes,  
And fondly broods with miser care;  
Time but th' impression deeper makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.  
My Mary! dear departed shade!  
Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
Seen thou thy lover lowly laid?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his  
breast?

## THE LOVELY

## LASS OF INVERNESS.

The first half stanza of this ballad is old.

Tune—The lass of Inverness.

## I.

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,  
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;  
For e'en and morn she cries—Alas!  
And aye the same tear blin's her e'e:  
"Dramonic morn, Dramonic day,  
A waulf' day it was to me;  
For there I lost my father dear,  
My father dear and brethren three."

## II.

"Their winding-sheet the bludey clay,  
Their graves are growing green to see;  
And by them lies the dearest lad  
That ever bless'd a woman's e'e!  
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,  
A bludey man I trow thou be;  
For monie a heart thou hast made sair,  
That ne'er did wrong to chime or thee."

## TO A LADY.

Tune—The lass of Livingston.

## I.

O'er, wert thou in the cold blast,  
On yonder lee, on yonder lee;  
My plaidie to the angry air,  
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;  
Or did misfortune's bitter noons  
Around thee blow, around thee blow,  
Thy bield should be my bosom,  
To share it a', to share it a'.

## II.

Or were I in the wildest waste,  
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,  
The desert were a paradise,  
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.  
Or were I monarch o' the globe,  
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign;  
The brightest jewel in my crown,  
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

## BONNIE ANN.

I composed this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Munterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Munterton, the author of the air of "Strathallen's Lament," and two or three others in this work.

## I.

Ye gallants bright, I red ye right,  
Beware o' Bonnie Ann;  
Her comely face has fa' o' grace,  
Your heart she will uter;  
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,  
Her skin is like the swan;  
Sae simply lac'd her genty waist,  
That sweetly ye might span.

## II.

Youth, grace, and love, attendant move,  
And pleasure leads the van;  
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,  
They wait on Bonnie Ann.  
The captive hands may chain the hands,  
But love enslaves the man;  
Ye gallants braw, I red ye a',  
Beware o' Bonnie Ann.

## THE

## PARTING KISS.

JOCKER'S W'EN THE PARTING KISS,  
O'er the mountains he is gane;  
And with him is a' my bliss,  
Nought but griefs with me remain.

Spare my love, ye winds that blow,  
Flinchy deets and beating rain;  
Spare my love, thou feathery snow,  
Drifting o'er the frozen plain!

When the shades of evening creep  
O'er the day's fair, gladsome e'e,  
Sound and safely may he sleep,  
Sweetly blithe his waukening be?

He will think on her he loves,  
Fondly he'll repeat her name;  
For where'er he distant roves,  
Jockey's heart is still at hame.

## EXTEMPORE

### IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

Tune—Gillcrankie.

#### LORD ADVOCATE.

He clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,  
He quoted and he hinted,  
Till in a declamation-mist,  
His argument he shut it:  
He gap'd for't, he gap'd for't,  
He fand it was awa, man;  
But what his common sense came short,  
He eked out wi' law, man.

#### MR. ERSKINE.

Collected Harry stood a wee,  
Then open'd out his arm, man;  
His lordship sat wi' rae fu' e'e,  
And ey'd the gathering worm, man:  
Like wind-driv'n hail it did email,  
Or torrents o'er a lin, man;  
The Bench sat wise lift up their eyes,  
Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

## CAPTAIN GROSE.\*

Tune—Sir John Malcolm.

Kan ye ought o' Captain Grose?  
Igo, & ago,  
If he's among his friends or foes?  
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he South, or is he North?  
Igo, & ago,  
Or drowned in the river Forth?  
Iram, coram, dago.

\* These verses were written in a wrapper, enclosing a letter to Captain Grose, to be left with Mr. Cardonnell, antiquarian.

Is he slain by Highland hodies?  
Igo, & ago,  
And catch like a weather-haggis?  
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abram's bosom gane?  
Igo, & ago,  
Or haudin' Sarah by the wame?  
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the Lord be near him!  
Igo, & ago,  
As for the deil, he daur na steer him.  
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit th' enclosed letter,  
Igo, & ago,  
Which will oblige your humble debtor.  
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye hae sold stanes in more,  
Igo, & ago,  
The very stanes that Adam bore.  
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,  
Igo, & ago,  
The coils o' Satan's coronation!  
Iram, coram, dago.

## FRAGMENT.

As I cam in by our gate-end,  
As day was waxin' weary;  
O wha cam tripping down the street,  
But bonnie Peg, my dearie.

Her air was sweet, and shape complee,  
Wi' nae proportion wanting;  
The queen of love did never move  
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

Wi' linked hands, we rock the sands,  
Adown yon winding river,  
And, oh! that heart, and broomy bower,  
Can I forget it ever?

~~~~~

MY PEGGY.

I.

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermitage might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the firs of human kind.

I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

II.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway?
Who but knows they all decay?
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms—
These are all immortal charms.

THE

BONNIE WEE THING.

Composed on my little idol, "The charming,
lovely Davina."

TUNE—The lads of Salween.

BONNIE wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wae'th thou mine;
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should lose.

Wistfully I look and languish,
In that bonnie face o' thine;
And my heart it aounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit and grace, and love and beauty,
In us consolation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonnie wee thing, &c.

O LAY THY LOOF.

CHORUS.

O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine lass,
And wear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

A SLAVE to love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me mair's than wae;
But now he is my deadly foe,
Unless thou be my ain.
O lay thy loof, &c.

There's mony a lass has broke my ree,
That for a blink I ha'e lo'ed her;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

O lay thy loof, &c.

THE

TITHER MORN.

TUNE—The tither morn, as I forlorn.

This tune is originally from the Highlands.
I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was
told was very clever, but not by any means a
lady's song.

Yon wand'ring rill, that marks the hill,
And glances o'er the brae, Sir,
Slides by a bower, where mony a flower
Sheds fragrance on the day, Sir.

There Damon lay, with Sylvia gay;
To love they thought nae crime, Sir;
The wild-birds sang, the echoes rang,
While Damon's heart beat time, Sir.

A DREAM.

These two stanzas I composed when I was
seventeen—they are among the oldest of my
printed pieces.

I.

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were spring-
ing,
Gaily in the sunny beam;
Lie'n'ing to the wild birds singing,
By a falling, crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Through the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlike wave.

II.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
So lang as noon, loud tempests morning,
A' my flow'ry bliss destroy'd.
Though fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of mony a joy and hope better'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

GLOOMY DECEMBER.

I.

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!

Ance mair I hail thee, wi' sorrow and care;

Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,

Parting wi' Nancy, Oh! ne'er to meet mair;

Fond lovers' parting is sweet, painful pleasure,

Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;

But the dire feeling, "O farewell for ever!"
Is anguish unmingled and agony pure.

II.

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,

Till the last leaf o' the summer is blown,

Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,

Since my last hope and last comfort is gone:

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,

Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;

For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,

Parting wi' Nancy, Oh! ne'er to meet mair.

THE

BONNIE YOUTH.

TUNE—Neil Gow's Lament.

This air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his lament for his brother. The first half-sanza of the song is old—the rest is mine.

I.

Tanna's a youth in this city, it were a great pity

That he from our lanes should wander awa;

For he's bonnet and brow, weel-favour'd with a',

And his hair has a natural buckle and a'.

His coat is the hue of his bonnet—see blue;

His focket is white as the new-driven snaw;

His hose they are blue, and his shoon like the ilse,

And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a'.

His coat is the hue, &c.

II.

For beauty and fortune the laddie's been courtin';

Weel-favour'd, weel-tocher'd, weel-mount-ed and brow;

But chiefly the siller, ye a' gars him gang till her,

The penic's the jewel that beautifies a'.

There's Meg wi' the mailen, that fair wad a haen him,

And Sary whose daddy was Laird o' the ha';

There's lang-tocher'd Nancy maist fatters his fancy—

But the laddie's dear sel he lo'es dearest o' a'.

There's Meg, &c.

THE

BANKS OF DEVON.

These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James McKirick Adair, Esq. physician. She is sister to my worthy friend, Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline; and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Haverham, in Cheshamshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work.

TUNE—Rhanerach dhon na chri.

I.

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,

With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair;

But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon

Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,

In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew;

And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,

That seals on the evening each leaf to renew.

II.

O, spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,

With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn

And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes

The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud
rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering
flows.

THE HIGHLANDS.

The first half-stanza of this song is old—the
rest is mine.

Tune—Falls na Miosg.

I.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not
here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the
deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the
North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of
worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

II.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with
snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys
below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging
woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring
floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not
here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the
deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

THE

BRUISED HEART.

Was is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e;
Lang, lang, joy's been a stranger to me;
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice o' pty ne'er sounds in
my ear.

Love, thou hast pleasures; and deep has I
lov'd;
Love, thou hast sorrows; and fair has I
prov'd;
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my
breast,
I can feel its droppings will soon be at rest.

O, if I were, where happy I have been,
Down by yon stream, and yon bonnie castle
green;
For there he is wand'ring and musing on me,
Wha wad soon dry the tear frae Phillis's e'e.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.

Tune—Johnny M'Gill.

This tune is said to be the composition of
John M'Gill, fiddler in Garvan. He called
it after his own name.

O wae thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dun-
bar?
O wae thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a
car,
Or walk, by my side, O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

I carena thy daddie, his land and his money,
I carena thy kin, aye high and aye lordly;
But say thou wilt hae me for better for waur,
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar.

THE

BONNIE MOOR-HEN.

Tune—I red you beware at the hunting.

The heather was blooming, the meadows
were mown,
Our lads gaed a hunting, ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors, and o'er mosses, and mony a
glen,
At length they discover'd a bonnie moor-hen.

CHORUS.

I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak some on the wing, and come as they
spring,
But cannal steal on a bonnie moor-hen.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown
 heather-bells,
 Her colour'd hairs'd her on yon mossy fell;
 Her plume outlustr'd the pride o' the
 spring,
 And oh! as the wanton'd gay on the wing.
 I red, &c.

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the
 hill,
 In spite at her plumage he tried his skill;
 He level'd his rays where she bask'd on the
 brae—
 His rays were outcome, and but mark'd
 where she lay.
 I red, &c.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the
 hill;
 The best of our lads wi' the best o' their
 skill;
 But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
 Then, whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.
 I red, &c.

FRAGMENT.

Out over the Forth I look to the north,
 But what is the north and the Highlands to
 me?
 The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
 The far foreign land, or the wild rolling
 sea.

But I look to the west, when I gae to my rest,
 That happy my dreams and my slumbers
 may be;
 For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
 The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

THE

CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.

TUNE—*Humours of Glen.*

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves
 returning,
 The murmuring streamlet winds clear thro'
 the vale;
 The hawthorn trees blow in the dews of the
 morning,
 And wild scatter'd cowslips badeck the
 green dale;

But what can give pleasure, or what can seem
 fair,
 While the lingering moments are number'd
 by care?
 No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly
 singing,
 Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dar'd could it merit their
 malice,
 A king and a father to place on his throne?
 His right are these hills, and his right are these
 valleys,
 Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I
 can find none.

But 'tis not my sufferings that wretched, for-
 lorn,
 My brave gallant friends, 'tis your ruin I
 mourn:
 Your deeds prov'd so loyal in hot bloody
 trial,
 Alas! can I make you no sweeter return!

THE EXCISEMAN.*

THE Deil cam fiddling through the town,
 And danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman;
 And like wife cry'd, "Auld Makoon,
 We wish you luck o' the price, man."

CHORUS.

"We'll mak our mae, and brew our drink,
 We'll dance and sing and rejoice, man;
 And mony thanks to the muckle black Deil,
 That danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman."

"There's threesome reek, and foursome reek,
 There's horrepipes and armshays, man;
 But the ae best dance e'er cam to our lan',
 Was—the Deil's awa wi' the Exciseman!"
 We'll mak our man, &c.

FRAGMENT.

THE winter it is past, and the summer comes
 at last,
 And the small birds sing on every tree;
 Now every thing is glad, while I am very sad,
 Since my true love is parted from me.

* These verses were written and sung at a
 general meeting of the excise officers at
 Dumfries.

The rose upon the brier by the waters running clear,
 May have charms for the linner or the bee;
 Their little loves are blest, and their little
 hearts at rest,
 But my true love is parted from me.

AN AULD MAN.

TEASE—What can a lassie do?

What can a young lassie, what shall a young
 lassie,
 What can a young lassie do wi' an auld
 man?
 Bad luck on the penny that tempted my
 minnie
 To sell her poor Jenny for ailler and lan'!
 Bad luck on the penny, &c.

He's always compleenin frae mornin to
 e'enin,
 He hams and he harkles the weary day
 lang;
 He's doyi'n and he's dozin, his blade it is
 frozen,
 O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!
 He's doyi'n, &c.

He hams and he harkles, he frets and he
 cackles,
 I never can please him, do a' that I can;
 He's provish and jealous o' a' the young fel-
 lows;
 O, doot on the day I met wi' an auld man!
 He's provish, &c.

My auld auntie Knie upon me takes pity,
 I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan;
 I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-
 break him,
 And then his auld brass will buy me a new
 pan.
 I'll cross him, &c.

AFTON-WATER.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among the green
 braes,
 Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy
 praise;
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
 dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro'
 the glen,
 Ye wild, whistling black-birds in yon thorny
 den,
 Thou green-crowned lapwing thy screaming
 forbear,
 I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring
 hills,
 Far mark'd with the courses of clear-winding
 rills;
 There daily I wander as noon rises high,
 My flock and my Mary's sweet cot in my
 eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys
 below,
 Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
 blow,
 There oft as mild evening weeps over the sea,
 The sweet-scented birch shades my Mary and
 me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it
 glides,
 And winds by the cot where my Mary re-
 sides;
 How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
 As gathering sweet flow'rets, she weeds thy
 clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
 braes,
 Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my
 lays;
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
 dream.

THE

YOUNG PLOUGHMAN.

As I was a wand'ring at morning in spring,
 I heard a young ploughman sing sweetly to
 sing;
 And as he was singing these words he did say,
 There's nae life like the ploughman, in the
 month o' sweet May.

* Afton-water is the stream on which
 stands Afton-lodge; to which Mrs. Stewart
 removed from Blair. Afton-lodge was Mrs.
 Stewart's property from her father. The song
 was presented to her in return for her notice,
 the first he ever received from any person in
 her rank of life.

The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise free
 her nest,
 And mount in the air wi' the dew on her
 breast,
 And wi' the merry ploughman she'll whistle
 and sing,
 And at night she'll return to her nest back
 again.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Macpherson, a daring robber, in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be hanged at the ainsies at Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own lament or farewell.*

FAREWELL ye dungeons dark and strong,
 The wretch's dominion!
 Macpherson's time will not be long,
 On yonder gallows tree.

CHORUS.

See rantingly, see wantonly,
 See denouncingly good he;
 He play'd a spring and danc'd it round,
 Below the gallows tree.

* To this notice of Burns it may be added, that the exploits of Macpherson were debased by no act of cruelty, no robbery of the widow, the fatherless, or the distressed; nor was any murder ever committed under his command. A dispute with one of his own troop, who wished to plunder a gentleman's house while his wife and two children lay on the bier for interment, was the cause of his being betrayed to the vengeance of the law. He was an admirable performer on the violin, and his talent for musical composition is evinced not only in his "Rant" and "Pi-broch," but also in his "Farewell," which he composed while he was in prison under sentence of death. When he came to the fatal tree, he played his "Farewell" upon a favourite violin, and, holding up the instrument, offered it to any one of his clan who would undertake to play the tune over his body at the lyke-wake; but as none answered, he broke it over his knee, and threw the pieces among the crowd. He died with the same fortitude as he had lived—a stranger to repentance, to remorse, and to fear. The wild mantras which Burns has put into his mouth are grounded on some traditional remains. His sword is still preserved at Duff-house, a residence of the Earl of Fife.

Oh, what is death but parting breath?
 On monie a bloody plain
 I've dared his face, and in this place
 I scorn him yet again!
 See rantingly, &c.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
 And bring to me my sword;
 And there's no a man in all Scotland,
 But I'll braver him at a word.
 See rantingly, &c.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
 I die by treacherie;
 It burns my heart I must depart,
 And not avenged be.
 See rantingly, &c.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
 And all beneath the sky!
 May coward shame dimain his name,
 The wretch that dares not die!
 See rantingly, &c.

THE

SONG OF DEATH.*

Scene, A Field of Battle.—Time of the Day,
 Evening.—The wounded and dying of the
 victorious Army are supposed to join in
 the following song.

TUNE.—Ours an Auld.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth,
 and ye skies,
 Now gay with the bright setting sun!
 Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender
 ties,
 Our race of existence is run;

* These verses were written in 1791, and printed in "Johnson's Musical Museum." The Poet had an intention, in the latter part of his life, of printing them separately, set to music, but was advised against it, or at least discouraged from it. The martial ardour which rose so high afterwards, on the threatened invasion, had not then acquired the tone necessary to give popularity to this noble production, which seems so well calculated to invigorate the spirit of defence. It is here printed with his last corrections.

Thou grim king of terrors, thou life's gloomy
foe,
Go, frighten the coward and slave;
Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but
know,
No terrors hast thou to the brave!

Thou strik'st the dull peasant, he sinks in the
dark,
Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name;
Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious
mark!
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

In the field of proud honour—our swords in
our hands,
Our king and our country to save—
While victory shines on life's last ebbing
sands,
Oh! who would not run with the brave!

THE VISION.*

THREE—CUMNOCK PALMS.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where the hawlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tills the midnight moon her care.

The winds were hild, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its lonely path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whae distant roarings swell and fa'.

* There is a poem, bearing the same title, supposed to be written by Allan Ramsay, which the Poet had perhaps in his eye when he wrote these beautifulanzas. The scenery here described is taken from nature. The author imagines himself to be musing by night on the banks of the river Cluden or Clowden, and by the ruins of Lincluden Abbey, founded in the twelfth century, in the reign of Malcolm IV. of whose present situation the reader may find some account in Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, or Grieve's *Antiquities of that division of the island*. Such a time and such a place are well fitted for holding converse with aerial beings. A strain of poetry similar to Bruce's Address to his Army, would have been worthy of the grandeur and solemnity of this preparation.

The cold blue north was streaming forth
Her light, wi' hissing, eerie din;
Awa' the life they meet and shift,
Like Fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moon-beam, shook, to see
A stern and stalwart ghast arise,
Acht' d as minstrels wot to be.

Had I a statue been o' wane,
His dour look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet gra'd was plain,
The sacred psalm—*Lazarus*!

And first his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the dumb'ring dead to hear;
But, oh! it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times;
But what he said, it was nae play,
I wenna venture'n in my rhymes.

MY BONNIE MARY.

This air is Oswald's—the first half-anzas of
the song is old—the rest mine.*

I.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tank;
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lass.
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blows, free the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

II.

The trumpet sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard a'far,
The battle grows thick and bloody;
But it's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to carry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard a'far;
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

* This song, which Burns here acknowledges to be his own, was first introduced by him, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, as two oldanzas.

CALEDONIA.*

TUNE—Caledonian Hunt's delight.

I.

TUNE was once a day, but old Time then
was young,

That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's di-
vines?)

* The strain of patriotic exultation in this ballad bears a striking resemblance to the ideas of Buchanan on the same subject. In his Epithalamium on the Marriage of Francis II. with Queen Mary, that elegant writer reminds the French monarch of the honours and advantages he derived from an alliance with a consort so illustrious. He expatiates on the ancient independence of his country, and the valour of its inhabitants. After enlarging on their virtues, he adds:

"*Artibus his, totum framerent cum bella
per orbem,*

*Nulleque non legi tellus muneret arces
Externa subjecta iugo, gens una veniens
Sedibus antiqua sub libertate resedit.
Subsidit hic Gothi furor, hic gravis impetus
hæsit*

*Saxonia, hic Cimber, superbo Saxone, et acri
Perdomito et Neuster Cimbro. Si volvere
priscos*

*Non piget annales, hic et victoria Exit
Præcipitum Romana gradum: quon non
gravis Auster*

*Reppulit, incubis non squallens Parchia
campis;*

*Non ists Merore, non frigore Rhœnis et Albis
Tardavit, Latium remorosa ex Scotia cur-
sam;*

*Solaque gens mundi est cum qua non culmine
montis,*

*Non rapidi ripis amala, non obijce sylvar,
Non vasti spatis campi Romana potestas,
Sed muris fossaque sui confinia regni
Munivit: genusque albas com pellentes armis
Sedibus, aut victas vilam servaret in usum
Servitii, hic cunctis suas defendere fines
Roma securigibus præstendit mœnia Scotis:
Hic spe progressus posita Carronis ad undam
Terminus Assonii signat divortia regni."*

"Hence it was, that when wars raged in
every other part of the world, when there
was no country which did not change its an-
cient laws, and bend under a foreign yoke,

From Tweed to the Orkades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she
would:

Her heavenly relations there fixed her reign,
And pledg'd her their godheads to warrant it
good.

II.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,

The pride of her kindred the heroine
grew:

Her grandaere, old Odin, triumphantly
swore—

"Who'er shall provoke thee, th' encoun-
ter shall rue!"

With tillage or pasture at times she would
sport,

To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling
corn;

But chiefly the woods were her fav'rite re-
sort,

Her darling amusement, the hounds and
the horn.

that a SINGLE NATION maintained its native
possessions, and its former liberty. Here it
was that the fury of the Goths was forced to
pause; here was checked the dreadful force
of the Saxons, of the Danes who vanquished
the Saxons, and of the Normans who van-
quished the Danes. If you do not blush to
read the annals of our ancestors—here it was
that victorious Rome stopped in her rapid
course—the whom neither the formidable
Carthaginian repulsed, nor the horrid deserts
of Parthia, nor the burning sun of Ethiopia,
nor the frozen Elbe, nor the Rhine could
stop—was compelled to pause on the confines
of Scotland. This was the only country in
which the Roman empire was bounded—not
by inaccessible mountains, not by the banks
of a rapid river, not by the barrier of a forest,
or by an extensive plain, but by walls and
trenches. While by her arms she was driving
other nations from their native seats, or re-
ducing them to disgraceful servitude—here
alone Rome was constrained to defend her
limits, and protect herself by ramparts from
the Caledonian battle-axe. Here, laying aside
the hope of conquest, Terminus, upon the
banks of the Carron, fixed the limits of the
Italian empire."

He proceeds, in a style not very courtly, to
remind Francis that the French nation had
never, since the days of Charlemagne, per-
formed any martial exploit of consequence
where the Scots had not borne away a full
share of the honours of the field. He con-
cludes with the usual anticipations of pros-
perity and happiness.

III.

Long quiet she reign'd; till thitherward sweep
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand;*
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd
the land:

Their pounces were murder, and terror their
cry,

They'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world be-
side;

She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly,
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

IV.

The fell Harpy-reven took wing from the
north,

The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the
shore;†

The wild Scandinavian bear howl'd forth
To women in carnage, and wallow in
gore;‡

O'er countries and kingdoms their fury pre-
vail'd,

No arms could appease them, no arms could
repel;

But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Luncarty
tell.§

V.

The Cameleon-savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disputes, rebellion, and strife;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his
life;||

The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oh! prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's sil-
ver flood;

But taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learn'd to fear in his own native wood.

VI.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd and
free,

Her bright course of glory for ever shall
run;

For brave Caledonia immortal must be;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:

* The Romans.

† The Saxons.

‡ The Danes.

§ The two famous battles in which the
Danes or Norwegians were defeated.

|| The Highlanders of the Isles.

Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is
the base;
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse;
Then, ergo, she'll match them, and match
them always.*

THE CARL

OF KELLYBURN BRAES.

These words are mine.—I composed them
from the old traditionary verses.

TAKES lived a carl on Kellyburn braes,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days;
And the thyme is it wither'd and the rue is
in prime.†

As day as the carl gae up the lang glen,
He met wi' the Devil; says, "How do you
fen?"

"I've got a bad wife, Sir; that's a' my com-
plain;

For, saving your presence, so her ye're a
saint."

"It's neither your son nor your ainig I shall
craze,
But gie me your wife, man, for her I must
have."

"O welcome, most kindly," the blythe carl
said;

"But if ye can match her, ye're wear nor
ye're ca'd."

The Devil has got the suld wife on his back;
And, like a poor pedlar, he's carried his pack.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallam-door;
Syne bade her gie in, for a birch and a whore.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his
band,

Turn out on her guard in the clap of a hand.

* This singular figure of poetry refers to
the famous proposition of Pythagoras, in the
47th of Euclid. In a right-angled triangle, the
square of the hypothenuse is always equal
to the squares of the other two sides.

† The second and fourth lines of this stanza
are repeated, in singing, at the second and
fourth of every succeeding stanza.

The carlin gaed through them like ony wude
bear,
Whae'er she gat hands on cam near her nae
mair.

A reekit wee Devil looks over the wa';
"O, help, mair, help, or she'll ruin us a'!"

The Devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife;

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
He was not in wedlock, thank heaven, but
in hell.

Then Saeen has travell'd again wi' his pack;
And to her auld husband he's carried her
back:

"I hae been a Devil the fack o' my life,
But ne'er was in hell, till I met wi' a
wife."

BONNIE DUNDEE.*

I.

O WHARE ga ye that heaver-meat bannock?
O silly blind bodie, O dinna ye see!
I got it frae a sodger laddie,
Between Saint Johnstone and Bonnie Dun-
dee.

O gin I saw the laddie that gaed me't!
Aft has he doudled me on his knee:
May hea'n protect my Bonnie Scotch laddie,
And sen' him safe hame to his bairn and
me!

II.

May bleuin lights on thy sweet, wee kippie!
May bleuin lights on thy Bonnie ee-bree!
Thou smilest aye like my sodger laddie,
Thou'st dearer, dearer aye to me!
But I'll big a bow'r on yon Bonnie banks,
Where Tay rics wimplin by aye clear;
And I'll clerd thee in the tartan fies,
And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear!

* This song was accompanied by the fol-
lowing heroic epistle:

"Dear Clegbourn,

"You will see by the above that I have
added a stanza to 'Bonnie Dundee.' If you
think it will do, you may set it agoing

'Upon a ten-string instrument,
And on the psaltery——'

Mr. Clegbourn,

Farmer—God bless the trade."

R. B.

THE WHISTLE.

As the authentic prose history of the
Whistle is curious, I shall here give it.

In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she
came to Scotland with our James the Sixth,
there came over also a Danish gentleman of
gigantic stature and great prowess, and a
matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a
hute abony Whistle, which, at the com-
mencement of the orgies, he laid on the table,
and whoever was last able to blow it, every
body else being disabled by the potency of
the bottle, was to carry off the Whistle as a
trophy of victory. The Dane produced cre-
dentials of his victories, without a single de-
feat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm,
Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty
courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots
bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his
prowess, or else of acknowledging their in-
feriority.

After many overthrows on the part of the
Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Ro-
bert Lawrie of Maxwellton, successor of the
present worthy baronet of that name; who,
after three days and three nights hard con-
test, left the Scandinavian under the table,

And blew on the Whistle his requiem thrill.

Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert before-men-
tioned, afterwards lost the Whistle to Walter
Riddell of Glenriddell, who had married a
sister of Sir Walter's.

On Friday, the 18th of October, 1790, at
Friars-Craig, the Whistle was once more
contended for, as related in the ballad, by
the present Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwell-
ton; Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, Esq. lineal
descendant and representative of Walter Rid-
dell, who won the Whistle, and in whose
family it had continued; and Alexander
Ferguson, Esq. of Craigharrach, likewise de-
scended of the great Sir Robert; which last
gentleman carried off the hard-won honour
of the field.

I saw of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish
king,
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall
sing.

Old Loda,* still racing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his
hall;

* See Ovidian's Carrio-Thura.

" This Whistle's your challenge, to Scotland
get o'er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne'er see
me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell;

The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the
Scour,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in
war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has
gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages re-
main'd;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his
blood,
The jovial comen again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear
of law;
Craigarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and
law;
And rosy Glenriddell, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-erud in old
wines.

Craigarroch began, with a tongue smooth as
oil,
Desiring Glenriddell to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would master the heads of the
clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the
man.

" By the gods of the ancients!" Glenriddell
replies,
" Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Roric
More,*
And bumper his horn with him twenty times
o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pre-
tend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or
his friend,
Said, Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the
field,
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die or he'd
yield.

To the board of Glenriddell our heroes re-
pair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more
known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet
lovely dame.

A Bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A Bard who deserv'd all wisdom and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had
been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And e'er'y new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so-
cets,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they
were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a
core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite
forlorn,
Till Cythis hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well worn out the
nights,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestor
did.

Then worthy Glenriddell, so cautious and
sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high-rauling Elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with face and quant bumpers
comend?
Though fate said—a hero should perish in
light;
So up rose bright Phœbus—and down fell the
knights.

Next arose our Bard, like a prophet in
drink;—
" Craigarroch, thou'lt soar when creation
shall sink!
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—once boutle more—and have at the sub-
lime!

" Thy line, that has struggled for freedom
with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce;

* See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.

So thine be the laurel, and mine be the
bay;
The field thou hast won, by yon brigaded of
day!"

YON WILD

MOSSY MOUNTAINS.

This tune is by Oswald. The song alludes
to a part of my private history, which it is of
no consequence to the world to know.

Yon wild mossy mountains are lofty and
wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the
Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys through
the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tends his flock as he pipes
on his reed:
Where the grouse, &c.

Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny
shores,
To me has the charms o' yon wild, mossy
moors;
For there, by a lanely, clear, sequester'd
stream,
Besides a sweet lassie, my thought and my
dream.
For there, &c.

Among these wild mountains shall still be my
path,
Ere stream foaming down in ain green, nar-
row strath;
For there, wi' my lassie, the day lang I
rove;
While o'er an unheeded, flie the swift hours
o' love.
For there, &c.

She is not the fairest, although she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her pennance humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es
me,*
Her pennance, &c.

To beauty what man but mean yield him a
prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and
sighs?

* "I love my love because I know my love
loves me."

Maid in Bedlam.

And when wit and refinement has polished
her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flie to our
hearts.
And when wit, &c.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond
sparkling e'e,
Has laurel outshining the diamond to me;
And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in
her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering
charms!
And the heart-beating, &c.

THE POSIE.

It appears evident to me that Oswald com-
posed his "Rodin Castle" on the modulation
of this air. In the second part of Oswald's,
in the three first bars, he has either hit on a
wonderful similarity to, or else he has en-
tirely borrowed the three first bars of the old
air: and the close of both tunes is almost
exactly the same. The old verses to which
it was sung, when I took down the notes from
a country girl's voice, had no great merit.
The following is a specimen—

There was a pretty May,* and a milkin she
went;
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black
hair;
And she has met a young man a comin o'er
the broot,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

O where are ye goin, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black
hair?
Unto the yowest a milking, kind Sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

What if I gang along wi' thee, my ain pretty
May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black
hair?
Wad I be aught the wair o' that? kind Sir,
she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.
&c. &c.

* Maid.

THE POSE.

I.

O love will venture in,
 Where it dear na wad be seen,
 O love will venture in,
 Where wisdom neer has been,
 But I will down you river rove,
 Among the wood an green;
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

II.

The primrose I will pu',
 The firstling o' the year;
 And I will pu' the pink,
 The emblem o' my dear,
 For she's the pink o' womankind,
 And blooms without a peer;
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

III.

I'll pu' the budding rose,
 When Phoebus peeps in view,
 For it's like a baumy kiss
 O' her sweet bonnie mou;
 The hyacinth's for constancy
 Wi' its unchanging blue,
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

IV.

The lily it is pure,
 And the lily it is fair,
 And in her lovely bosom
 I'll place the lily there;
 The daisy's for simplicity
 And unaffected air,
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

V.

The hawthorn I will pu',
 Wi' its locks o' silber grey,
 Where, like an aged man,
 It stands at break o' day,
 But the songster's nest within
 The bush I wina tak away;
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

VI.

The woodbine I will pu',
 When the evening star is near,
 And the diamond drops o' dew
 Shall be her een an clear;
 The violet's for modesty
 Which wad she fa'to wear,
 And a' to be a pose to my ain dear May.

VII.

I'll tie the pose round
 Wi' the silken band o' love,
 And I'll place it in her breast,
 And I'll swear by a' above,
 That to my latest draught o' life
 The band shall ne'er remove,
 And this will be a pose to my ain dear May.

SOMEBODY.

Tune—The Highland Watch's farewell.

I.

My heart is sair, I dare na tell,
 My heart is sair for somebody;
 I could wake a winter night
 For the sake o' somebody.
 Oh-hen! for somebody!
 Oh-hey! for somebody!
 I could range the world around,
 For the sake o' somebody.

II.

Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,
 O, sweetly smile on somebody!
 Free like danger keep him free,
 And send me safe my somebody.
 Oh-hen! for somebody!
 Oh-hey! for somebody!
 I wad do—what wad I not?
 For the sake o' somebody!

UP IN THE MORNING.

The chorus of this is old—the two stanzas
 are mine.

CHORUS.

Up in the morning's no for me,
 Up in the morning early;
 When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snow,
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cauld blows the wind frae east to west,
 The drift is driving sairly;
 See lead and thrill's I hear the blast,
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chattering in the thorn,
 A' day they fare but spairly;
 And lang's the night frae e'en to morn,
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.
 Up in the morning, &c.

BONNIE JEAN.

These were originally English verses—I gave them their Scotch dress.

I.

It is na, Jean, thy bonnie face,
Nor shape that I admire,
Although thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awa'k desire.
Something in loka part o' thee
To praise, to love, I find;
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

II.

Nae mair ungent'rous wish I ha'e,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee see,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee;
And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

THE

CHEERFUL LABOURER.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in verification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

TUNE—The weaver and his shunkle, O.

I.

My Father was a Farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O
And carefully he bred me
In decency and order, O
He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing, O
For without an honest, manly heart,
No man was worth regarding, O.

II.

Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O
Though to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O
My talents they were not the worst;
Nor yet my education; O
Resolve'd was I, at least to try,
To mend my situation, O.

III.

In many a way, and vain quest,
I courted fortune's favour; O
Some cause unseen, will creep between,
To frustrate each endeavour; O
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd;
Sometimes by friends forsaken; O
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

IV.

Then were harass'd, and cir'd at last,
With fortune's vain delusion; O
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams,
And came to this conclusion; O
The past was bad, and the future hid;
Its good or ill untried; O
But the present hour was in my pow'r,
And so I would enjoy it, O.

V.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I;
Nor person to befriend me; O
So I must toil, and sweat and broil,
And labour to sustain me, O
To plough and sow, to reap and mow,
My father bred me early; O
For one, he said, to labour bred,
Was a match for fortune fairly, O.

VI.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor,
Through life I'm doom'd to wander, O
Till down my weary bones I lay
In everlasting slumber; O
No view nor care, but shun whate'er
Might breed me pain or sorrow; O
I live to-day as well's I may,
Regardless of to-morrow, O.

VII.

But cheerful still, I am as well,
As a monarch in a palace, O
Tho' fortune's frown still haunts me down,
Wish all her wom'd malice; O
I make indeed, my daily bread,
But ne'er can make it further; O
But as daily bread is all I need,
I do not much regard her, O.

VIII.

When sometimes by my labour
I earn a little money, O
Some unforeseen misfortune
Comes generally upon me; O
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect,
Or my goodnature'd folly; O
But come what will, I've sworn it still,
I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

IX.

All you who follow wealth and power
 With unrelenting ardour, O
 The more in this you look for bliss,
 You leave your view the farther; O
 Had you the wealth Poesi boasts,
 Or nations to adore you, O
 A cheerful honest-hearted clown
 I will prefer before you, O.

CASTLE GORDON.

Toss—Moray.

I.

Brigsaws that glide in silent plains,
 Never bound by winter's chains;
 Glowing here on golden sands,
 There commix'd with foulten rains
 From tyranny's empurpled bands:
 These, their richly-gleaming waves,
 I leave to tyrants and their slaves:
 Give me the stream that sweetly laves
 The banks by Castle Gordon.

II.

Spicy forests, ever gay,
 Shading from the burning ray
 Hapless wretches sold to toil,
 Or the ruthless native's way,
 Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil:
 Woods that ever verdant wave,
 Leave the tyrant and the slave,
 Give me the groves that lofty brave
 The storms by Castle Gordon.

III.

Wildly here without control,
 Nature reigns and rules the whole;
 In that sober pensive mood,
 Dearest to the feeling soul,
 She pines the forest, pours the flood;
 Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
 And find at night a sheltering cave,
 Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
 By bonnie Castle Gordon.

MARY'S E'E.

I.

Now bank and brake are cloth'd in green,
 And scatter'd cowslips sweetly spring;
 By Given's fairy-bann'd stream
 The birdies flit on wamon wing.

To Cassillis' banks when e'en'ing fa's,
 There wi' my Mary let me flae,
 There catch her like glance o' love,
 The bonnie blink o' Mary's e'e!

II.

The child who boasts o' world's wealth,
 Is often laird o' meikle care;
 But Mary she is a' my ain,
 Ah, Fortune canna gie me mair!
 Then let me range by Cassillis' banks,
 Wi' her the laurie dear to me,
 And catch her like glance o' love,
 The bonnie blink o' Mary's e'e.

PRAYER FOR MARY.*

I.

Powers celestial, whose protection
 Ever guards the virtuous fair,
 While in distant climes I wander,
 Let my Mary be your care:
 Let her form be fair and faultless,
 Fair and faultless as your own;
 Let my Mary's kindred spirit
 Draw your choicest influence down.

II.

Make the gales you waft around her,
 Soft and peaceful as her breast;
 Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
 Sooth her bosom into rest:
 Guardian angels, O protect her,
 When in distant lands I roam!
 To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
 Make her haum still my home.

A RED, RED ROSE.

Toss—Wishaw's favourite.

O, we love's like a red, red rose,
 That's newly sprung in June:
 O, we love's like the melody
 That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
 So deep in love am I:
 And I will love thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry.

* Probably written on Highland Mary, on the eve of the Fox's intended departure to the West Indies.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love!
And fare thee weel a-while!
And I will come again, my love,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

ROBIN.

CHORUS.

Rests shure in haire,
I shure wi' him,
Fiest a hawk had I,
Yet I suck by him.

I gied up to Dunro,
To wair a web o' plaiden,
At his daddie's yeu,
Wha met me but Robin?

Was na Robin bauld,
Though I was a cotter,
Play'd me sic a trick,
And me the elder's dochter?
Robin shure, &c.

Robin promis'd me
A' my winter viule;
Fiest haet he had her three
Gowd feathers and a whistle.
Robin shure, &c.

FRAGMENT.

TUNE—Bonnie Dundee.

In Mauchline there dwells six proper young
belles,
The pride of the place and its neighbour-
hood a',
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would
guess,
In Lon'on or Paris they'd gotten it a'.

Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Bony is
braw;
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss
Morton,
But Armour's * the jewel for me o' them a'.

* Afterwards Mrs. Burns.

MY TOCHER.

TUNE—My Tocher's the jewel.

This tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow.
It is notoriously taken from "The Mackin
o' Geordie's Byre." It is also to be found,
long prior to Nathaniel Gow's era, in
"Aird's Selection of Airs and Marches,"
the first edition, under the name of "The
Highway to Edinburgh."

O maikle thinks my love o' my beauty,
And maikle thinks my love o' my kin;
But little thinks my love I ken brawlie,
My Tocher's the jewel has charms for him.

It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the honey he'll cherish the bee;
My laddie's na maikle in love wi' the ailler,
He can na hae love to spare for me.

Your proffer o' love's an air-penny,
My Tocher's the bouspin ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty, I am cannie,
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune mair try.

Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack your credit wi' mae nor
me.*

POLLY STEWART.

TUNE—Ye're welcome, Charlie Stewart.

O lovely Polly Stewart,
O charming Polly Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half so fair as thou art.

CHORUS.

THE flower is blown, it fades, it fa's,
And an can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth eternal youth
Will gie to Polly Stewart.

May he, whose arms shall fould thy charms,
Possess a bauld and true heart;
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart!
O lovely, &c.

* The four last lines of this song are old.
The first two lines of the second stanza are
also much older than Burns's words.

MY HOGGIE.*

Dr. Walker, who was minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now (1790) Professor of Natural History, in the University of Edinburgh, told Mr. Riddell the following anecdote concerning this air. He said that some gentlemen, riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Mosspaul; when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock, at her door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called, "What will I do gin my Hoggie die?" No one, except a few females at Mosspaul, knew this fine old tune; which, in all probability, would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen, who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down.

What will I do gin my hoggie die?

My joy, my pride, my hoggie;

My only heart, I had one mae,

And wow! but I was wae.

The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,

Me and my faithfu' doggie;

We heard naught but the roarin' lion,

Among the brans we scroggie.

But the howlet cry'd frae the cauld wa',

The blinzer frae the hoggie,

The tod reply'd upon the hill;

I trembled for my hoggie.

When day did daw, and cocks did crow,

The morning it was foggie;

An unco tyke lap o'er the dyke,

And maine has killed my hoggie.

FRAGMENT.

Tune—The king of France he rode a race.

1.

Awa' the trees where humming bees

At buds and flowers were hinging, O

Auld Calceon drew out her drone,

And to her pipe was singing; O

'Twas pibroch, sang, strathspey, or reel,

She dirt'd them aff, fu' clearly, O

When there cam a yell o' foreign squeals,

That dang her apsalteric, O.

* HOGGIE, a young sheep, before it has lost its first fleece.

11.

Their capon crows and queer ha ha's,

They made our legs grow eerie; O

The hungry birk did scrape and pike

Till we were wae and weary; O—

But a royal ghast who ance was ca'd,

A prisoner eighteen year awa,

He fir'd a biddler in the North

That dang them apsalteric, O.

WOMEN'S MINDS.

Tune—For a' that.

Twice women's minds, like winner winds,

May shift and turn, and a' that,

The nobles' brains adores them main,

A consequence I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,

And twice as muckle's a' that,

The bonnie lass that I lo'e best,

She'll be my ain for a' that.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,

Their humble slave, and a' that;

But lordly wits, I hold it still

A mortal sin to throw that.

For a' that, &c.

But there is aye about the lave,

Has wit and sense and a' that;

A bonnie lass, I like her best,

And woe a crime dare ca' that?

For a' that, &c.

In rapture sweet this hour we meet,

Wi' mutual love and a' that;

But for how lang the bliss may stang,

Let inclination law that.

For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,

They've taen me in and a' that;

But clear your decks, and here's the sax!

I like the jades for a' that.

For a' that, &c.*

* Three stanzas of this song are taken from that of the Bard in "The Jolly Beggar." See p. 81.

FRAGMENT.

TUNE—John Anderson my jo.

ONE night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down to ponder,
Upon an auld tree root:

Auld Airc ran by before me,
And hicker'd to the sea;
A cushat crowded o'er me
That echoed through the brake.

MY BONNIE LASS.

I.

HERE'S to thy health, my bonnie lass,
Gude-night and joy be wi' thee;
I'll come nae mair to thy bower door,
To tell thee that I lo'e thee.
O dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee;
I vow and swear I dinna care
How lang ye look about ye.

II.

Thou'rt aye ae free informing me,
Thou hast nae mind to marry,
I'll be ae free informing thee,
Nae time has I to tarry.

I ken thy frien's try ilka means
Frae wedlock to delay thee,
Depending on some higher chance;
But fortune may betray thee.

III.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me;
For I'm as free as any he,
Some' ailler will relieve me.
I'll count my health my greatest wealth,
See lang as I enjoy it;
I'll fear nae want, I'll hode nae want,
As lang's I get employment.

IV.

But far aff fowls hae feathers fair,
And aye until ye try them;
Though they seem fair, will have a care,
They may prove as bad as I am.
But at twel at night, when the moon shines
bright,
My dear, I'll come and see thee;
For the man that loves his mistress weel,
Nae travel makes him weary.

NOTE.—There are three songs inserted in some editions of the Works of Burns which are not his. They are entitled, "Farewell to Ayrshire," "Evan Banks," and "Della." The first was written by a poet of some merit of the name of Gall; the second, by a lady; and the third is a translation of an anonymous Latin poem.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

SEVERAL PERSONS.

OF the following Letters of Burns, a considerable number were transmitted for publication by the individuals to whom they were addressed; but very few have been printed entire. It will easily be believed, that in a series of letters written without the least view to publication, various passages were found unfit for the press, from different considerations. It will also be readily supposed, that the Author, writing nearly at the same time, and under the same feelings, to different individuals, would sometimes fall into the same train of sentiment and forms of expression. To avoid, therefore, the tediousness of such repetitions, it has been found necessary to mutilate many of the individual letters, and sometimes to excise parts of great delicacy—the unbridled effusions of panegyric and regard. But though many are printed from originals thus supplied, others are copied from first draughts, or sketches, found among the papers of the Author.

Burns appears at one time to have formed an intention of making a collection of his letters for the amusement of a friend. Accordingly he copied an inconsiderable number of them into a book, which he presented to Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, Esq. Among these was the account of his life, addressed to Dr. Moore. In transcribing from his imperfect sketches, he occasionally enlarged his observations, and altered his expressions. In such instances his emendations have been adopted.—CURRIE.

In the present Edition the mutilated passages of some of the letters have been restored. A valuable collection has also been interspersed, of the existence of which Dr. Currie was altogether ignorant. Among them will be found some of the finest that Burns ever wrote.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

SEVERAL PERSONS.

TO A FEMALE FRIEND,*

WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1789.

I VERILY believe, my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. This, I hope, will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean, their being written in such a serious manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for a zealous bigot who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I do not

know how it is, my dear; for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought, that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, it is something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy, which are but too apt to infect me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me, in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that he may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view,

* The young woman to whom this and the three following letters are addressed, was the object of the Author's affections for six or eight months. They were, he says, written chiefly to show his abilities in the epistolary style. He confesses, however, that it cost him some heartaches to get rid of the affair. He afterwards presented her with a copy of the first edition of his Poems, with two farewell mannae, previous to his intended departure for Jamaica. See p. 124.

worthy of a man, and I will add, worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst, in reality, his affection is centered in her pocket; and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market, to choose one who is stout and firm, and as we say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex, which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I do not envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.

II.

TO THE SAME.

My dear E.

I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion of the ordinary way of falling in love amongst people of our station of life. I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves. Some one of them

is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greatest part of us; and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you has to play when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere; and yet though you see him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at farthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware, that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you, that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour; and by consequence, so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the married state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please; and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am, the noble faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion, that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree.

If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest periods of life, I can look forward and see, that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age—even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to you, I

will regard my E. with the tenderest affection, and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

"O, happy state when souls each other draw!
When love is liberty, and nature law!"

I know, were I to speak in such a style to many a girl who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship; but I shall make no apology. I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see unless.

III.

TO THE SAME.

My dear E.

I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though, in every other situation in life, telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when the passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness, which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth; and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity

of manners—to such a one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of forboding fears, and distrustful anaesthetics crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be used by any one in so noble, so generous a passion as virtuous love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom-friend through life—there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and I will add, of a Christian.

There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this; that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further, that if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue—if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness—if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover.

IV.

TO THE SAME.

I ought in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again; and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory. You were sorry you could not make me a return; but you wish me—what without you I never can obtain—you wish me all kind of happiness. It would be weak and unmanly to say, that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that sharing life with you, would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I never can taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me. These, possibly, in a few instances, may be met with in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with in such a degree in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond any thing I have ever met with in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination had fondly flattered itself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mis-

tress, still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you; and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will perhaps soon leave this place, I wish to see you or hear from you soon; and if an expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss (pardon me the dear expression for once),

V.

TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Honoured Sir, Irvine, Dec. 27, 1781.

I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder; and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, although I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very

much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

"The soul weary, and confin'd at home,
Reins and experience is a world to come."

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth 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.

As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flatter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me; and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope, have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's-day, I shall conclude.

I am, honoured Sir, your dutiful son,

ROBERT BURNS.

P. S. My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow, till I get more.

VI.

TO MR. JOHN MURDOCH,

SCHOOLMASTER, STABLES' INN BUILDINGS,
LONDON.

Dear Sir, Locklee, Jan. 15, 1783.

As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter, without putting you to that

expence which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship. I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but as a man of the world I am most miserably deficient. One would have thought, that bred as I have been, under a father who has figured pretty well as an *homme des affaires*, I might have been what the world calls a pushing, active fellow; but to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly any thing more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world to see, and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be any thing original about him, which shows me human nature in a different light from any thing I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling object I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to any thing further. Even the last, worst shift of the unfortunate and the wretched, does not much terrify me. I know that even then, my talent for what country folks call a *sensible crack*, when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem—that even then I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for, though indolent, yet so far as an extremely deli-

cate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not indeed for the sake of the money, but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach; and I scorn to fear the face of any man living. Above every thing, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, whom in my heart I despise and detest. It is this, and this alone, that endears economy to me.

In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profane. My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as *Shenstone*, particularly his *Elegies*; *Thomson*; *Man of Feeling*, a book I prize next to the Bible; *Man of the World*; *Sterne*, especially his *Sentimental Journey*; *Macpherson*'s *Osian*. These are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct; and it is incongruous, it is absurd, to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at their sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race—he “who can soar above this little scene of things,” can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the territorial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves! O how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and “catching the manners living as they rise,” whilst the men of business jostle me on every side as an idle incumbrance in their way. But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common-place story, but my warmest kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from,

Dear Sir, yours, &c.

VII.

TO MR. RIDGELL.

On rummaging over some old papers, I lighted on a MS. of my early years, in which I had determined to write myself out, as I was placed by fortune among a class of men to whom my ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant that the book should have lain by me, in the fond hope that, some time or other, even after I was no more, my thoughts would fall into the hands of somebody capable of appreciating their value. It sets off thus:

[Here follow several extracts from the MS. which will be found at length at the end of the volume.]

This is all worth quoting in my MSS.; and more than all.

R. B.

VIII.

TO MR. DAVID BRICE.

Dear Brice, Mosgail, June 12, 1786.

I received your message by G. Paterson, and as I am not very busy at present, I write just to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you, that will give me any pleasure to mention or you to hear. And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then farewell dear old Scotland, and farewell dear ungrateful Jean, for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence Poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it

will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as fast as possible.

Believe me to be, dear Brice,

Your friend and well-wisher.

IX.

TO MR. AIKEN.*

Sir,

Ayrshire, 1786.

I was with Wilson, my printer, the other day, and settled all by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the *first and readiest*, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper; but this, you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition till I grow richer!—an epocha, which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely any thing hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantyne, by publishing my poem of *The Brigs of Ayr*. I would detest myself as a wretch if I thought I were capable, in a very long life, of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection, but sheerly the instinctive emotion of

a heart too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering state of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances every thing that can be laid in the scale against it.

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet, I think, I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stunted bourn of our present existence; if so, then how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence—how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocence of helpless infancy! O thou great, unknown Power! thou Almighty God! who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality! I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary

* This is the gentleman to whom "The Courier's Saturday Night" is addressed.

for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me nor forsaken me.

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet I have seen something of the storm of mischance thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power in that way to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages is the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, oh, enjoying it, only threaten to entail farther misery—

To tell the truth, I have little reason for complaint, as the world, in general, has been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining, distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my school-fellows and youthful competitors (those misguided few excepted, who joined, to use a Canton phrase, the *ballachers* of the human race), were striking off with eager hope and earnest intention, some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was standing "idle in the market-place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from

flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim.

You see, Sir, that if to *know* one's errors were a probability of *amending* them, I stand a fair chance; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.*

X.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
OF DUNLOP.

Madam, Ayrshire, 1786.

I am truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the trillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus; nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor Bard dances with rapture, when those whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-choord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the *Saviour of his Country*.

* Great passion here! ill-required chief!"

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was *The Life of Hannibal*; the next was *The History of Sir William Wallace*; for several of my earlier years I had few other

* This letter was evidently written under the distress of mind occasioned by the Poet's separation from Mrs. Burns.

authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days I remember in particular being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

"Sylvie in the Leglen wood, when it was
June,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loreto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymist) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him, in some measure equal to his merits.

II.

TO MRS. STEWART,
OF STAIR.

Madam, 1796.

The hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c. which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you; but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of *Etrick Banks*, you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript. I think myself it has some merit, both as a tolerable description of one of Nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening, and one of the finest pieces of Nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we knew any thing of—an amiable, beautiful young woman; but I have no common friend

to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.*

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure Bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high sanctity, their own great and god-like qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connexions in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your competitors; and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember—the reception I got, when I had the honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness; but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart. Surely, did those exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.

XII.

TO MISS ALEXANDER,
OF BALLOCHVUE.

Madam, Montpelier, Nov. 15, 1796.

Poets are such *entre beings*, so much the children of wayward fancy and ca-

* The song enclosed is that referred to in the following letter. See p. 192.

precious whim, that I believe the world generally allow them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the enclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best my abilities can produce; and what, to a good heart, will perhaps be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *revoir* as he wandered by you. I had roved out, as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial, kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you, your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn-twigs that shot across the way, what heart, at such a time, but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast! Such was the scene and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever

crowned a poetic landscape, or met a poet's eye, those visionary birds excepted who hold commerce with aerial beings! Had calumny and villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object!

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain, dull, historic prose into metaphor and measure.

The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might be expected from such a scene.

I have the honour to be, Madam,
your most obedient,
and very humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

XIII.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

MANCHESTER.

My dear Sir, Mouglet, 1786.

I went to Dr. Douglas yesterday, fully resolved to take the opportunity of Capt. Smith; but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him, that to send me from Savannah in Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts he refuses sending me with Smith; but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of September, right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's, and as good a fellow as heart could wish; with him I am destined to go. Where I shall

shelter, I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it.

"I'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang's I dow."

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them.

"O woman, lovely woman! Heaven design'd you
To temper man! we had been brutes without you!"

XIV.

TO MR. CHALMERS,*

WRITER, &c.

Edinburgh, Dec. 27, 1786.

My dear Friend,

I confess I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness— ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but, of all men living, I had intended to send you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers that, in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—a heavily solemn oath this!—I am, and have been ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour as to write a commentary on the Revelation of John the Divine, who was banished to the isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the

Christians, and after throwing the said apostle John, brother to the apostle James, commonly called James the greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the less, after throwing him into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee, to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck. One blank in the *Address to Edinburgh*, "Fair B——," is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been any thing nearly like her, in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-street.

XV.

TO THE EARL OF ROBINSON.

My Lord, Edinburgh, Jan. 1787.

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world; but have all those national prejudices which, I believe, grow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely anything to which I am so feelingly alive as the honour and welfare of my coun-

* This letter is now presented entire.

try; and, as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished; though, till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks; but my heart whispered me to do it. From the emotions of my latest soul I do it. Selfish ingratitude, I hope, I am incapable of; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to detest.

XVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Madam, Edinburgh, Jan. 15, 1787

Yours of the ninth current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a lie—I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you; but, though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him, has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of "the sons of little men." To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the

author of *The Flow of Society and Manners* a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed any thing on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print, and the inclosed, which I will print in this edition.* You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my *Vision*, long ago, I attempted a description of Kyle; of which the additional stanzas are a part as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the *Saviour of his Country*, which, sooner or later, I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius,

* See also in "The Vision," p. 75, beginning "By stately tower or palace fair," and ending with the first Duane.

aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you, once for all, to disburden my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But

“When proud fortune’s ebbing tide recedes,”

you will bear me witness, that, when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood, unintoxicated, with the inchelating cup in my hand, looking forward with rufal resolve to the hastening time when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengful triumph.

Your patronising me, and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifling

has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a Bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace?

XVII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Sir,

1787.

Mrs. Dunlop has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic Bard the honour of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and sollicitudes of authorship, can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence; only I am sorry they mostly came too late: a perçant passage or two, that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compoers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any writers, either moral or political, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had; and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear—where Thomson and Beattie have painted

the landscape, and Lyttelton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

XVIII.

TO THE REV. G. LOWRIE,*

OF NEWMILLS, NEAR BILMARNOCK.

Edinburgh, 5th February, 1787.

Reverend and dear Sir,

When I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingratitude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account, by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention; do me the justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel, for you, the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend, and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul, for your friendly hints; though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but, in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind a while: to it I owe my present exalt; but I see the time not far distant, when the popular tide, which has borne me to a height of which I am perhaps unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty: I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my

* This is the individual at whose house Burns composed that beautiful Prayer, which he left in the room where he slept. See p. 117.

intellectual powers, before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, any thing to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed, early years.

In Dr. Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have found, what I would have expected in your friend, a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Lowrie and her pianoforte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs. Lowrie a compliment that Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated "Man of Feeling," paid to Miss Lowrie, the other night, at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him, till I saw Miss Lowrie in a seat not very far distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to Mr. Mackenzie, he asked me who she was. I told him, 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the west country. He returned, There was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say, "She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl."

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St. Margaret's.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most gratefully,

ROBT. BURNS.

XIX.

TO THE HONOURABLE BAILIES

OF CANONGATE, EDINBURGH.

Gentlemen,

Feb. 6, 1787.

I am sorry to be told, that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly cele-

brated poet, a man whose talents, for ages to come, will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard, among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish Song, when they wish to shed a tear over the "narrow house" of the Bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory; a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

I petition you, then, Gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property, to his deathless fame. I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,
Your very humble servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

XX.

TO DR. MOORE.

Sir, Edinburgh, Feb. 15, 1787.

Pardon my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 24. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast any thing higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me: I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment; but genius, polished by learning and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit, I do not deny: but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my

countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her, in my name, my most grateful thanks.* I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which, for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore: there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, *remorse* tenderness of time-accutled sorrow.

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

XXI.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

My Lord, Edinburgh, 1787.

I wanted to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with any thing of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, There is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship, by

* This was for a Sonnet which she wrote on reading his "Mountain Daisy."

the honest throes of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition.* I owe much to your lordship; and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment where I was under the patronage of one of the much-favoured sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country. Allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's highly indebted,
and ever grateful, humble servant.

XXII.

TO THE EARL OF DUCHAN.

My Lord,

The honour your lordship has done me by your notice and advice in yours of the first instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:

"Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy
to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it
most."

* It does not appear that the Earl granted this request; nor were the verses alluded to found among the MSS.

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country; to sit and muse on those once hard-contended fields, where Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of these enthusiastical reveries, a long-slaaged, dry, moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words—

"I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence.
Friend, I do not come to open the ill-
closed wounds of your follies and mis-
fortunes, merely to give you pain. I wish
through these wounds to imprint a last-
ing lesson on your heart. I will not
mention how many of my salutary ad-
vices you have despised. I have given
you line upon line and precept upon pre-
cept; and while I was chalking out to
you the straight way to wealth and cha-
racter, with audacious effrontery, you
have zig-zagged across the path, con-
temning me to my face. You know the
consequences. It is not yet three months
since home was so hot for you, that you
were on the wing for the western shore
of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune,
but to hide your misfortune.

"Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts
it in your power to return to the situation
of your forefathers, will you follow these
Will-o'-the-Wisp meteors of fancy and whim,
till they bring you once more to the brink
of ruin? I grant that the utmost ground
you can occupy is but half a step from the
veriest poverty; but still it is half a step
from it. If all that I can urge be inef-
fectual, let her who seldom calls to you
in vain—let the call of Pride prevail with
you. You know how you feel at the
iron grip of ruthless oppression—you

know how you bear the galling yoke of contumacious greatness. I hold you out the conveniences, the comforts of life, independence and character on the one hand—I tender you servility, dependence, and wretchedness on the other. I will not insult your understanding by bidding you make a choice.”*

This, my lord, is unanswerable. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail. Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons who have honoured me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times, as now, draw forth the swelling tear.

XXIII.

TO ———.

My dear Sir,

You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say—thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the by, there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to me so unaccountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning of the business his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frost of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising

sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

I have enclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract* is literally as Mr. Spout sent it me.

The inscription on the stone is as follows—

HERE LIES

ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET.

Born, September 24th, 1754—Died, 18th October, 1774.

* No sculptur'd marble," &c. see p. 176.

* Ext. Property in favour of Mr. ROBERT BURNS, to erect and keep up a Headstone in memory of Poet FERGUSSON, 1787.

Session-house, within the Kirk of Canon-gate, the 21d day of February, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven years.

Sederant of the Managers of the Kirk and Kirk-yard Funds of Canon-gate.

Whereas day, the treasurer to the said funds produced a letter from Mr. Robert Burns, of date the 6th current, which was read, and appointed to be engrossed in their Sederant-book, and of which letter the tenor follows—"To the honourable Bailies," &c. see No. xix. p. 244.

Thereafter the said managers, in consideration of the laudable and distinguished merit of Mr. Burns, and the propriety of his request, did and hereby do, unanimously, grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Fergusson, and to keep up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming.

Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by

WILLIAM SPOUT, Clerk.

* This and the preceding paragraph are removed from the Bee, vol. ii. p. 319.

On the other side of the stone is as follows—

"By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Ferguson."

XXIV.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH,

STUDENT IN PHYSIC, COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

Edinburgh, March 31, 1787.

My ever dear old Acquaintance,

I was equally surprised and pleased at your letter; though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you, that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old and once dear connexions. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that*. I thought of it, and thought of it, but for my soul I cannot; and lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit though, that the strength of your logic scares me. The truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shown me one thing, which was to be demonstrated; that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I, likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinoza trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength, of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I must stop; but don't impute my brevity to a wrong cause. I am still, in the apostle Paul's phrase, "the old man with his deeds," as when we were sporting about the lady thorn. I shall be four

weeks here yet, at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you—welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

My dear old friend,

Yours.

XIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Madam, Edinburgh, March 22, 1787.

I read your letter with watery eyes. A little, very little while ago, I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom; now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices, I will not give them the cold name of criticisms, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here; but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures; his hints, with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects. There I can give you no light—it is all

"Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
Athwart the gloom profound."

The appellation of a Scottish Bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it, is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which, heaven knows! I am unfit enough, to make leisurly pilgrimages

through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts. I have dallied long enough with life: it is time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for; and some other bosom ties, perhaps equally tender.

Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may be excusable: may, shining abilities, and some of the noble virtues, may half sanctify a heedless character; but where God and nature have entrusted the welfare of others to his care, where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship. With that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough; and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry: being bred to labour secures me independence; and the muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only, enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business of life; but, while following my plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of my character, which gave me the notice of my country, and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honoured Madam, I have given you the Bard, his situation, and his views, native as they are in his own bosom.

XVI.

TO THE SAME.

Madam, Edinburgh, April 13, 1787.

There is an affection of gratitude which I dislike. The periods of Johnson and the passages of Sterne, may hide a selfish heart. For my part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for servility, and too little prudence for selfishness. I have this moment broke open your letter, but

....."Rude am I in speech,
And therefore little can I grace my cause
In speaking for myself—"

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand on my heart, and say, I hope I shall ever have the trust, the warmest, sense of your goodness.

I come abroad in print for certain on Wednesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend to; only, by the way, I must tell you that I was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss Williams's copies, through the medium of Commissioner Cochrane in this place; but that we can settle when I have the honour of waiting on you.

Dr. Smith* was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him.

XVII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Edinburgh, April 23, 1787.

I received the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill skilled in beating the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank

* Adam Smith.

you, Sir, for the honour you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book, is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem, is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight; and after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of Caledonia, *Cowden Kessers, Banks of Tarnew, Tured, &c.*, I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetic compliment in kind.

XXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, April 30, 1787.

..... Your criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined

to flatter no created being, either in prose or verse.

I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, critics, &c. as all these respective gentry do by my Bardship. I know what I may expect from the world by and by—liberal abuse, and perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my "Dream," which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing, at Dunlop, in its defence, in person.

XXIX.

TO THE REV. DR. HUGH BLAIR.

Lawn-Market, Edinburgh, May 3, 1787.

Reverend and much-respected Sir,

I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship you have shown me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honoured by the notice of those illustrious names of my country, whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honour me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man—I knew very well, that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over. I have made up my mind that

abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Hugo's work for me, done on Indian paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony with what heart-warm gratitude I am, &c.

XXX.

TO MR. W. NICHOLL,

MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Mauchline, June 18, 1797.

My dear Friend,

I am now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your grey-headed, revered friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalryston, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands, and his reception of my Bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with the Dumfries folks. Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gude forgive me, I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart: in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind

very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity—the intrepid, unyielding independence—the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage SATAN. It is true, I have just now a little rash; but I am afraid that the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith; that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon. Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for the walks of business; add to all, that, thoughtless follies and half-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-bewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor hoodless Bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again."

God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them! they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report,"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "is strong as death." My compli-

ments to Mrs. Nicholl, and all the circle of our common friends.

P. S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

XXXI.

TO MR. WALKER,

BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

Inverness, Sept. 5, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I have just time to write the foregoing,* and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of a half hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was *extempore*, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicholl's chat, and the jogging of the chaise, would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The little "angel band!"—I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyers. I shall never forget the fine family piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble Duchess, with her smiling, little scragh in her lap, at the head of the table; the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother; the beautiful Mrs. G.; the lovely, sweet Miss C. &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed—Mr. G. of F.'s charms of conversation—Sir W. M.'s friendship—in short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company, raises an honest glow in my bosom.

* "The humble Petition of Bruar-Water to the Duke of Athole." See p. 108.

XXXII.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, Sept. 17, 1787.

My dear Brother,

I arrived here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands, by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and druidical circles of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence cross Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the Duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his Grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey, and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music, Badenoch, &c., till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed in which, tradition says, king Duncan was murdered; lastly, from Fort George to Inverness.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen; thence to Stonehaven, where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women. John Caird, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can; they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow; but farther particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in

two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing. Warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing towns or fertile canes? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day with the Duke, Duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty, and many compliments, from the north, to my mother, and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a birth for William, but am not likely to be successful. Farewell.

XXXIII.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS,*

(AFTERWARDS MRS. RAY, OF EDINBURGH.)

Sept. 26, 1787.

I send Charlotte the first number of the songs;† I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book; but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend to make it description of some kind. The whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand,

is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline . . . —a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesterday from the old, venerable author of "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries, to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms. Do tell that to Lady M'Kenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence." What a blessed fire-side! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Herrieston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years." In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild

* This and the subsequent letters addressed to this lady, are only fragments. In an evil hour, the originals were thrown into the fire by the late Mrs. Adair of Scarborough; the Charlotte so often mentioned in this correspondence, and the lady to whom "The Banks of the Devon" is addressed.

† "The Scots Musical Museum."

but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave*. As for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure—permanent pleasure, “which the world cannot give, nor take away” I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Without date.

I have been at Dumfries; and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it, but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man, (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family,) I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and, at our leisure, take another farm in the neighbourhood. I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now completed. The air is admirable—true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am sure it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I will not say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well; and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere but just.

[Here follows the song of “The Banks of the Devon.”—*see p. 217*]

XXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1787.

I have one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well-filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, to whom, I declare to my God, I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so, like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first. What you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or, to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now, none of your polite hints about flattery. I leave that to your lovers, if you have, or shall have any; though, thank Heaven, I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds, and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss, a *lover*.

Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting places for any soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny, wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle. I glory in being a poet, and I want to be thought a wise man. I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. “Some folk has a hantle o' faults, and I am but a ne'er-do-weel.”

Afternoon—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion, com-

monly known in Carrick by the title of the "Wahster's grace."

"Some say we're thieves, and e'en see us
twice!

Some say we lie, and often we do well!
 God forgive us, and I hope we will be!
 —Up, and to your beams, ladies!"

1139

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

Mr Lord,

I know your lordship will disapprove of my ideas in a request I am going to make to you ; but I have weighed, long and seriously weighed, my situation, my hopes, and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme, if I can possibly effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise. I am told that your lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the Commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tide of *bwae* that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters, from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.

My brother's farm is but a wretched lease; but I think he will probably weather out the remaining seven years of it; and, after the assistance which I have given, and will give him, to keep the family together, I think, by my guess, I shall have rather better than two hundred pounds; and, instead of seeking what is almost impossible at present to find, a farm that I can certainly live by, with so small a stock, I shall lodge this sum in a banking-house, a sacred deposit, excepting only the calls of uncommon distress, or accretious old age.

These, my lord, are my views. I have resolved from the maturest deliberation; and, now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your lordship's patronage is the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to any body else. Indeed my heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the Great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise, as the cold denial; but to your lordship I have not only the honour, the comfort, but the pleasure of being

Your lordship's much obliged,
And deeply indebted humble servant."

XXVII.

TO — DALRYMPLE.

OF ORANGEFIELD.

Dear Sir, Edinburgh, 1767.

I suppose the devil is so elated with his success with you, that he is determined, by a *coup de main*, to complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me; hummed over the rhymes; and, as I saw they were extempore, said to myself, they were very well; but when I saw at the bottom a name I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I gapt wide but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the friends of Job of a

* It would be hard to think that this letter was coldly or negligently received. But the office appointment which he solicited was not procured by any exertion of his noble patron's influence. Mr. Alexander Wood, surgeon, (still affectionately remembered as "kind old Sandy Wood,") happened to hear Barn, while his patient, mention the object of his wishes, went and communicated the circumstance to Mr. Graham of Fintry, who immediately had his name put on the roll.

siction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spake not a word.

.....

I am naturally of a superstitious cast, and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness, and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfall of the conclave, or the crashing of the cork ramps; a decal coronet to Lord George Gordon, and the Protestant interest; or St. Peter's keys to

You want to know how I come on. I am just in *statu quo*, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, "in auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glencairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns with a goodness like that benevolent Being whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful squire, H. L., or the reverend Master J. M. go into their primitive nothing. At best they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos, only one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throb of benevolence, shall look on with princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

XXXVIII.

TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

Sir,

December, 1787.

Mr. M'Kenzie, in Macchilnig, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed

me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronised by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by friends to them, and honoured acquaintance to me; but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevolence and goodness of heart has interested him for me, unsolicited and unknown.

I am not master enough of the etiquette of these matters to know, nor did I stay to inquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner, as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the justice to believe this letter is not the manoeuvre of the needy, sharpening author, fastening on those in upper life who honour him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed, the situation of poets is generally such, to a proverb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by any means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn; but I believe a careless, indolent inattention to economy, is almost inseparable from it; then there must be, in the heart of every bard of Nature's making, a certain modest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, that will ever keep him out of the way of those windfalls of fortune, which frequently light on hardy impudence and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his, whose poetic fancy unfits him for the world, and whose character as a scholar gives him some pretensions to the *politesse* of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shade, and

I have an independent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one who pretended in the least to the manners of the gentleman, should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am; and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion—but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness, but one—a return which, I am persuaded, will not be unacceptable—the honest, warm wishes of a grateful heart for your happiness, and every one of that lovely flock who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever Calumny aim the poisoned shaft at *them*, may friendship be by to ward the blow!

XXXIX.

TO THE REV. JOHN SKINNER,

LINLITHGOW.*

Without date.

Reverend and venerable Sir,

Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical com-

pliment I ever received. I assure you, Sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your other capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live shall regret, that when I was in the north, I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—*Tullochgorum's my delight!* The world may think slightly of the craft of song-making if they please; but, as Job says, "O! that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rest with you. Our true brother, Ross of Leckie, was likewise "owre cauld,"—"a wild warlock!"—but now he slings among the "sons of the morning."

I have often wished, and will certainly endeavour, to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world are not our *perris*—so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness, independent of that world.

There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best

* This and the subsequent letter (No. XLVI.) have not appeared in the series of the Correspondence of Burns published either by Currie or Cromek. In the summer of 1787, the Poet made a tour through the west and north of Scotland; and at Aberdeen met with Mr. Skinner's son, between whom an interesting conversation took place. The particulars of this interview were communicated to the father, stating also how much Burns

regretted that he did not know where Linlithgow lay, as he would have gone twenty miles out of his way to have seen the author of *Tullochgorum*. This compliment immediately produced an epistle in familiar verse addressed to Burns, who wrote this letter in reply.

assistance.* An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch Songs, with the Music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted; but the Music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining, respecting their origin, authors, &c. This last is but a very fragment business; but at the end of his second number (the first is already published), a small account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of latter times. Your three songs, *Tullochgorum*, *John of Badgeron*, and *Bowie wi' the crookit Harn*, go in this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times; and if you would be so kind to this undertaking, as send any Songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish. Your name will be inserted among the other authors, "*Will ye, will ye.*" One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you—the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

Sir, your obliged humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

XL.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I am here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion;

* Johnson's Medical Museum.

and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror proceeding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and, incomparatively, the lightest evil: misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a "quadruple alliance" to guarantee the other. I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and have got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my book-binder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I inclose a proof copy of "*The Banks of the Devon*," which present, with my best wishes, to Charlotte. "*The Ochil Hills*," you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches!

XLI.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I begin this letter in answer to yours of the 17th current, which is not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my hardship, not on my *poetic*, but on my *saken* stilts; throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance, as a May frog leaping across

the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long-expected shower!

I cannot say I am altogether at my ease when I see any where in my path, that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty; attended, as he always is, by iron-fisted oppression, and leering contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day already, and still my motto is—I dare. My worst enemy is *moi-même*. I lie so miserably open to the larouds and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence, and forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost always in a state of perpetual warfare, and, alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia—or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

XLII.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.

My dear Madam,

I just now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay you cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, Madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the

first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my Poems (by second sight I suppose); for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear Madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by an ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world the odds between a Poet's friends and those of simple prose-men. More, for your information, *both* pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving angry winter's storms," is already set—the tune is "Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercraiy;"* the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's "Collection of ancient Scots Music;" the name is "Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheidh." My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about "Les Incas," only I think you mentioned them as being in C——'s possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so any thing, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw your's to ———; it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. ——— has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns, in his sorer moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated, and his knowledge of his father's disposition—the whole affair is chimerical—yet he *will* gratify an idle penchant at the enormous, cruel expence, of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the ge-

* See p. 191.

nerous passion of love! He is a gentleman in his mind and manners—*tant pis!* He is a volatile school-boy—the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Ferdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely ———, the derided object of their purse-proud contempt.

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs. ———'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her.

"As I cam in by Glenap
I met with an aged woman;
She bade me cheer up my heart,
For the best o' my days was comin."

XLIII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN,*

IRVINE.

Edinburgh, Dec. 30, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I have met with few things in life which have given me more pleasure than Fortune's kindness to you, since those days in which we met in the vale of misery; as I can honestly say, that I never knew a man who more truly deserved it, or to whom my heart more truly wished it. I have been much indebted, since that time, to your story and sentiments for

steeling my mind against evils, of which I have had a pretty decent share. My Will-o'-wisp fate you know. Do you recollect a Sunday we spent together in Eglinton woods? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a Magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces, which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet. I am happy to hear that you will be two or three months at home. As soon as a bruised limb will permit me, I shall return to Ayrshire, and we shall meet; "and faith, I hope we'll not sit dumb, nor yet cast out!"

I have much to tell you of "men, their manners, and their ways;"—perhaps a little of the other sex. Apropos, I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Brown. There, I doubt not, my dear friend, but you have found substantial happiness. I am impatient to see her as well as you. I expect to find you something of an altered, but not a different man;—the wild, bold, generous young fellow, composed into the steady, affectionate husband, and the fond, careful parent. For me, I am just the same Will-o'-wisp being I used to be. About the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade-wind of wisdom; but about the full and change, I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes, which blow me into chaos. Almighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom; and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow, who has wit and beauty more murderously fatal, than the assassinating stiletto of the Sicilian handstil, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My Highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have gravely removed into a neighbouring chest, the key of which I cannot command, in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by the fol-

* Of the seven letters addressed to this individual, none appear in the Collections of Currie or Cromek. He was a ship-master in the West India trade, and had formed an intimacy with Burns during his residence in Irvine. (See p. 23 and 28.) These letters, which were written in 1787, 1788, and 1789, a period when the Poet was in the full blaze of reputation, show, that he was at no time so dazzled by success, as to forget the friends who had anticipated the public in discovering his merit.

lowing verses which she sent me the other day.*

My best compliments to our friend Allan. Adieu!

ROBERT BURNS.

XLIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, Jan. 21, 1788.

After six weeks confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission; for I would not take in any poor, ignorant wretch, by *selling out*. Lately I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough: now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet—a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh, and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop-house.

XLV.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1788.

Some things in your late letters hurt me; not that you *say them*, but that you

mistake me. Religion, my honoured Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest enjoyment. I have indeed been the luckless victim of wayward follies: but, alas! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion is a probable character; an irreligious poet is a monster.

XLVI.

TO THE REV. JOHN SKINNER,

LINCOLN.

Edinburgh, Feb. 14, 1788.

Reverend and dear Sir,

I have been a tripple now nearly three months, though I am getting vastly better, and have been very much hurried beside, or else I would have wrote you sooner. I must beg your pardon for the epistle you sent me appearing in the Magazine. I had given a copy or two to some of my intimate friends, but did not know of the printing of it till the publication of the Magazine. However, as it does great honour to us both, I hope you will forgive it. The second volume of songs I mentioned to you in my last, is published to-day. I send you a copy, which I beg you will accept as a mark of the veneration which I have long had, and ever shall have, for your character, and of the claim I make to your continued acquaintance. Your songs appear in the third volume, with your name in the index, as I assure you, Sir, I have heard your "*Tullochgorum*," particularly among our west-country-folks, given to many different names, and most commonly to the immortal author of "*The Minstrel*," who, indeed, never wrote any thing superior to "*Gie's a sang, Montgomery cried*." Your brother has promised me your verses to "*The Marquis*

* See Letters to Clarinda, No. viii.

of Hantly's Reel," which certainly deserve a place in the Collection. My kind host, Mr. Cruickshanks, of the High School here, and said to be one of the best Latin scholars in this age, begs me to make you his grateful acknowledgments for the entertainment he has got in a Latin publication of yours that I borrowed for him from your acquaintance, and my much respected friend, in this place, the reverend Dr. Webster. Mr. Cruickshanks maintains that you write the best Latin since Buchanan. I leave Edinburgh to-morrow, but shall return in three weeks. Your song, you mentioned in your last, to the tune of "Dumbarton Drums," and the other, which you say was done by a brother by trade of mine, a ploughman, I shall thank you much for a copy of each.

I am ever, reverend Sir,
with the most respectful esteem,
and sincere veneration, yours,
ROBERT BURNS.

XLVII.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Feb. 14, 1788.

To-morrow, my dear Madam, I leave Edinburgh.

I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in I could not find; and indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken. I have entered into the excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go *au il plait a Dieu—et mon Roi*. I have chosen this, my dear friend, after ma-

ture deliberation. The question is not at what door of Fortune's palace shall we enter in, but what door does she open to us? I was not likely to get any thing to do. I wanted an *hut*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation. It is immediate bread; and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, it is luxury in comparison of all my preceding life. Besides, the commissioners are all of them my acquaintances, and some of them my firm friends.

XLVIII.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

Edinburgh, Feb. 15, 1788.

My dear Friend,

I received yours with the greatest pleasure. I shall arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening; and beg, if possible, you will meet me on Tuesday. I shall wait you Tuesday all day. I shall be found at Durie's, Black Bull Inn. I am hurried, as if husted by fifty devils, else I should go to Greenock; but if you cannot possibly come, write me, if possible, to Glasgow, on Monday; or direct to me at Mossiel by Mauchline; and name a day and place in Ayrshire, within a fortnight from this date, where I may meet you. I only stay a fortnight in Ayrshire, and return to Edinburgh.

I am ever, my dearest friend, yours,
ROBERT BURNS.

XLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Mossiel, Feb. 24, 1788.

My dear Sir,

I cannot get the proper direction for my friend in Jamaica; but the following

will do: To Mr. Jo. Hutchinson, at Jo. Brownrigg's, Esq. care of Mr. Benjamin Henriquez, merchant, Orange Street, Kingston. I arrived here at my brother's only yesterday; after fighting my way through Faldy and Kilmarnock, against those old powerful foes of mine, the devil, the world, and the flesh; so terrible in the fields of dissipation.

I have met with few incidents in my life which gave me so much pleasure as meeting you in Glasgow. There is a time of life, beyond which we cannot form a tie worth the name of friendship.

"O youth! enchanting stage, profoundly blest!"

Life is a fairy scene. Almost all that deserves the name of enjoyment, or pleasure, is only a charming delusion; and in comes repining Age, in all the gravity of hoary wisdom, and wretchedly chases away the bewitching phantom. When I think of life, I resolve to keep a strict look-out, in the course of economy, for the sake of worldly convenience, and independence of mind; to cultivate intimacy with a few of the companions of youth, that they may be the friends of age; never to refuse my liquorish humour a handful of the sweetmeats of life, when they come not too dear; and for futurity—

"The present moment is our sin,
The noon we never saw."

How like you my philosophy! Give my best compliments to Mrs. B.; and believe me to be,

My dear Sir, yours most truly,

R. B.

L.

TO THE SAME.

Mauchline, March 7, 1788.

I have been out of the country, my dear friend, and have not had an op-

portunity of writing till now, when I am afraid you will be gone out of the country too. I have been looking at farms, and, after all, perhaps I may settle in the character of a farmer. I have got so vicious a bent to idleness, and have ever been so little a man of business, that it will take no ordinary effort to bring my mind properly into the routine. But you will say, "a great effort is worthy of you." I say so myself; and butter up my vanity with all the stimulating compliments I can think of. Men of grave geometrical minds, the sons of "which was to be demonstrated," may cry up reason as much as they please; but I have always found an honest passion, or native instinct, the truest auxiliary in the warfare of this world. Reason almost always comes to me like an unlucky wife to a poor devil of a husband, just in sufficient time to add her reproaches to his other grievances.

I found Jean with her cargo very well laid in; but unfortunately moored almost at the mercy of wind and tide. I have towed her into a convenient harbour, where she may lie snug till she unload, and have taken the command myself, not ostensibly, but for a time in secret. I am gratified with your kind inquiries after her, as, after all, I may say with Othello—

....."Excellent wretch,
Ferdinand catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

I go for Edinburgh on Monday, &c.

LI.

TO MR. N—B.

Montpel, March 7, 1788.

I have partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glenconner with me to Mr. Miller's farm,

and he was so pleased with it, that I have wrote an offer to Mr. Miller; which, if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer, the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmarnock, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition, about Galston and Newmills; and I shall set off so early as to dispatch my business, and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the spring will renew your shattered frame, and make your friends happy. You and I have often agreed, that life is no great blessing on the whole. The close of life indeed, to a reasoning eye, is,

"Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his
beams
Ashew'd the gloom profound."

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley—be it so—at least there is an end of pain, care, work, and wants. If that part of us called Mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with old-wife prejudices and tales! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are weak, of consequence they have often, perhaps always, been deceived. A man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow-creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport, at times, of passions and instincts—be goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other

end in giving him existence, but to make him happy—who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force.

These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself—particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark.

Adieu, my dear Sir! God send us a cheerful meeting!

ROBERT BURNS.

LII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mougiel, March 7, 1788.

Madam,

The last paragraph in yours of the 23th February affected me most, so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a slinger with any little wit I have, I do confess; but I have taxed my recollection to no purpose to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm a great deal worse than I do the devil; at least, as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my honoured friend, who cannot appear in any light but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or, if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many and the esteem of all; but God help us who are wits or wittings by profession, if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of *Colin*.* I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his Muse *Scots*, from which, by the by, I took the idea of *Colin*. It is a poem of Beattie's in the *Scots* dialect, which perhaps you have never seen.

"Ye shake your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set wild *Scots* on her legs:
Lang had she lien wi' boffie and flegs,
Bombar'd and dizzie,
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
Wae me, poor lassie!"

LIII.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, March 14, 1788.

I know, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news, when I tell you, I have at last taken the lease of a farm. Yesternight I completed a bargain with Mr. Miller, of Dalreminston, for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. I begin at White Sunday to build a house, drive lime, &c.; and Heaven be my help! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies and pleasures; a motley host! and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a life-guard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess; and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly feeble resolve.

* Her daughter Rachel was making a picture from the description of *Colin* in "The Vision."

Poor Miss K. is doing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain! Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition—too *scotic* for the dirt of avarice—and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure—formed indeed for, and highly susceptible of, enjoyment and rapture—but that enjoyment, alas! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.

LIV.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

Glasgow, March 26, 1788.

I am monstrously to blame, my dear Sir, in not writing to you, and sending you the Directory. I have been getting my tack extended, as I have taken a farm; and I have been racking shop accounts with Mr. Creech, both of which, together with watchdog, fatigue, and a load of care, almost too heavy for my shoulders, have in some degree actually fevered me. I really forgot the Directory yesterday, which vexed me; but I was convulsed with rage a great part of the day. I have to thank you for the ingenious, friendly, and elegant epistle from your friend Mr. Crawford. I shall certainly write to him, but not now. This is merely a card to you, as I am posting to Dumfries-shire, where many perplexing arrangements await me. I am vexed about the Directory; but, my dear Sir, forgive me. These eight days I have been positively crazed. My compliments to Mrs. B. I shall write to you at Grenada.

I am ever, my dearest friend, yours, &c.

LV.

TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN.

Mauchline, May 31, 1788.

Yesterday, my dear Sir, as I was riding through a track of melancholy, joyless mists, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, *Captain O'Keen*, coming at length in my head, I tried these words to it. You will see that the first part of the tune must be repeated.

[Here follows the first stanza of "The Chevalier's Lament." The whole of the song, as it was afterwards finished, will be found in p. 214.]

I am tolerably pleased with these verses, but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music.

I am so harassed with care and anxiety about this farming project of mine, that my Muse has degenerated into the veriest prose-wench that ever picked cladders, or followed a tinker. When I am fairly got into the routine of business, I shall trouble you with a longer epistle; perhaps with some queries respecting farming; at the present, the world sits such a load on my mind, that it has effaced almost every trace of the — in me.

My very best compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Cleghorn.

LVI.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, April 7, 1788.

I am indebted to you and Miss Nimmo for letting me know Miss Kennedy.

Strange! how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who pique myself on my skill in marking characters, because I am too proud of my character as a man, to be dazzled in my judgment *for* glaring wealth, and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biased *against* squalid poverty, I was unacquainted with Miss K.'s very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in *man grand but*, the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices, for which, were I *often* *near* with you to paint the situation and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me.

LVII.

TO THE SAME.

No date.

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke measures with —; and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honour that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor damned, incensious, duped, unfortunate fool!—the sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochoondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bed-lam passions!

"I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die!"

I had lately "a hairbreadth 'escape in the imminent deadly breach" of love too. Thank my stars, I got off heart-whole, "wound flayed than hurt."—*Inter-ruption.*

I have this moment got a hint
 I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best! Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution! accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path; but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

LVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, April 28, 1788.

Madam,

Your powers of reprehension must be great indeed, as I assure you they made my heart ache with penitential pangs, even though I was really not guilty. As I commence farmer at Whitsunday, you will easily guess I must be pretty busy; but that is not all. As I got the offer of the excise business without solicitation, and as it costs me only six weeks' attendance for instructions, to entitle me to a commission; which commission lies by me, and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed, I thought five and thirty pounds a-year was no bad *dernier* resort for a poor poet, if fortune, in her jade tricks, should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up.

For this reason, I am at present attending these instructions, to have them completed before Whitsunday. Still, Madam, I prepared, with the sincerest pleasure, to meet you at the Mount, and came to my brother's on Saturday night, to set out on Sunday; but for some nights

preceding, I had slept in an apartment where the force of the winds and rains was only mitigated by being sifted through numberless apertures in the windows, walls, &c. In consequence, I was on Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday, unable to stir out of bed, with all the miserable effects of a violent cold.

You see, Madam, the truth of the French maxim, *Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vrai-semblable*. Your last was so full of expostulation, and was something so like the language of an offended friend, that I began to tremble for a correspondence, which I had with grateful pleasure set down as one of the greatest enjoyments of my future life.

 Your books have delighted me. *Virgil*, *Dryden*, and *Tasso*, were all equally strangers to me; but of this more at large in my next.

LIX.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

Mauchline, May 3, 1788.

Sir,

I enclose you one or two more of my bagatelles. If the fervent wishes of honest gratitude have any influence with that great, unknown Being, who frames the chain of causes and events, prosperity and happiness will attend your visit to the Continent, and return you safe to your native shore.

Wherever I am, allow me, Sir, to claim it as my privilege to acquaint you with my progress in my trade of rhymes; as I am sure I could say it with truth, that, next to my little fame, and the having it in my power to make life more comfortable to those whom nature has

made dear to me, I shall ever regard your countenance, your patronage, your friendly good offices as the most valued consequence of my late success in life.

LX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, May 4, 1788.

Madam,

Dryden's Virgil has delighted me. I do not know whether the critics will agree with me, but the Georgics are to me by far the best of Virgil. It is indeed a species of writing entirely new to me; and has filled my head with a thousand fancies of emulation. But, alas! when I read the Georgics, and then survey my own powers, it is like the idea of a Shetland pony, drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred hunter to start for the plate. I own I am disappointed in the *Æneid*. Faultless correctness may please, and does highly please the lettered critic; but to that awful character I have not the most distant pretensions. I do not know whether I do not hazard my pretensions to be a critic of any kind, when I say that I think Virgil, in many instances, a servile copier of Homer. If I had the *Odyssey* by me, I could parallel many passages where Virgil has evidently copied, but by no means improved Homer. Nor can I think there is any thing of this owing to the translators; for, from every thing I have seen of Dryden, I think him, in genius and fluency of language, Pope's master. I have not perused Tasso enough to form an opinion. In some future letter, you shall have my ideas of him; though I am conscious my criticisms must be very inaccurate and imperfect; as there I have ever felt and lamented my want of learning most.

LXI.

TO THE SAME.

Madam,

May 27, 1788.

I have been torturing my philosophy to no purpose, to account for that kind partiality of yours, which, unlike has followed me in my return to the shade of life, with assiduous benevolence. Often did I regret, in the fleeting hours of my late Will-o'-wisp appearance, that "here I had no continuing city;" and, but for the consolation of a few solid guineas, could almost lament the time that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life, insignificance and poverty.

There are few circumstances relating to the unequal distribution of the good things of this life, that give me more vexation (I mean in what I see around me), than the importance the opulent bestow on their trifling family-affairs, compared with the very same things on the contracted scale of a cottage. Last afternoon I had the honour to spend an hour or two at a good woman's fire-side, where the planks which composed the floor were decorated with a splendid carpet, and the gay table sparkled with silver and china. It is now about term-day,* and there has been a revolution among those creatures, who, though in appearance partakers, and equally noble partakers of the same nature with Madame, are, from time to time, their nerves, their sinews, their health, strength, wisdom, experience, genius, time, nay, a good part of their very thoughts, sold for months and years

* Servants, in Scotland, are hired from term to term; that is, from Whitsunday to Martinmas, &c.

..... not only to the necessities, the conveniences, but the caprices of the important few. We talked of the insignificant creatures, nay, notwithstanding their general stupidity and rascality, did some of the poor devils the honour to commend them. But light be the turf upon his breast, who taught—"Reverence thyself." We looked down on the unpolished wretches, their impatient wives and cloutierly brats, as the lordly bull does on the little dirty ant-hill, whose pony inhabitants he crushes in the carelessness of his rambles, or tosses in the air in the wantonness of his pride.

LXII.

TO THE SAME,

AT MR. DUNLOP'S, HARRINGTON.

Enthused, June 18, 1788.

Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untrivell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my friend is warm with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthen'd chain.

GOLDSMITH.

This is the second day, my honoured friend, that I have been on my farm. A solitary inmate of an old, smoky spence; far from every object I love, or by whom I am beloved; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except *Jenny Golden*, the old mare I ride on; while uncouth cares and novel plans hourly insult my awkward ignorance and bashful inexperience. There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care; consequently the dreary objects seem larger than life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence, when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage

of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.

"The valiant in himself what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his single woes?"

Your surmise, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband.

I found a once much-loved and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements but as I enabled her to purchase a shelter; and there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery.

The most placid good nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure—these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding.

To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger. My preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me; my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her.*

In housewife matters, of aptness to learn and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress; and during my absence in *Nithsdale*, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy and other rural business.

* This and the following paragraphs, so honourable to the integrity and moral principles of Burns, were, from obvious motives, suppressed by Dr. Currie. We are indebted to Mr. Cramack for their preservation.

The Muses must not be offended when I tell them, the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the *par*; but I assure them their ladyships will ever come next in place.

Your are right that a bachelor state would have insured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unamistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.

LXIII.

TO MR. P. HILL.

No date.

My dear Hill,

I shall say nothing at all to your mad present. You have long and often been of important service to me; and I suppose you mean to go on conferring obligations until I shall not be able to lift up my face before you. In the mean time, as Sir Roger de Coverly, because it happened to be a cold day in which he made his will, ordered his servants great coats for mourning, so, because I have been this week plagued with an indigestion, I have sent you by the carrier a fine old ewe-milk cheese.

Indigestion is the devil; nay, it is the devil and all. It besets a man in every one of his senses. I lose my appetite at the sight of successful knavery; and sicken to loathing at the noise and nonsense of self-important folly. When the hollow-hearted wretch takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; the proud man's wine so offends my palate that it chokes me in the gullet; and the *pulverised*, feathered, pert coxcomb, is so disgusting in my nostril, that my stomach turns.

If ever you have any of these disagreeable sensations, let me prescribe for you patience and a bit of my cheese. I know that you are no niggard of your good things among your friends, and some of them are in much need of a slice. There is my eye is our friend, Smellie; a man positively of the first abilities and greatest strength of mind, as well as one of the best hearts and keenest wits that I have ever met with; when you see him, *aa*, alas! he too is smarting with the pinch of distressful circumstances, aggravated by the sneer of contumelious greatness—a bit of my cheese alone will not cure him; but if you add a tankard of brown stout, and superadd a magnum of right Oporto, you will see his sorrows vanish like the morning mist before the summer sun.

C——h, the earliest friend, except my only brother, that I have on earth, and one of the worthiest fellows that ever any man called by the name of friend, if a luncheon of my cheese would help to rid him of some of his superabundant modesty, you would do well to give it him.

David,* with his *Courazer*, comes too, across my recollection, and I beg you will help him largely from the said ewe-milk cheese, to enable him to digest those—bedaubing paragraphs with which he is eternally larding the lean characters of certain great men in a certain great town. I grant you the periods are very well turned; so, a fresh egg is a very good thing; but when thrown at a man in a pillory it does not at all improve his figure, not to mention the irreparable loss of the egg.

My facetious friend, D——r, I would wish also to be a partaker; not to digest his spleen, for that he laughs off, but to

* David Ramsay, printer of "The Edinburgh Evening Courant."

digest his last night's wine at the last field-day of the Crochallan corps.*

Among our common friends, I must not forget one of the dearest of them, Cunningham. The brutality, insolence, and selfishness of a world unworthy of having such a fellow as he is in it, I know sticks in his stomach; and if you can help him to any thing that will make him a little easier on that score, it will be very obliging.

As to honest J—— S——e he is such a contented happy man, that I know not what can annoy him, except perhaps he may not have got the better of a parcel of modest anecdotes which a certain poet gave him one night at supper, the last time the said poet was in town.

Though I have mentioned so many men of law, I shall have nothing to do with them professedly. The faculty are beyond my prescription. As to their *clients*, that is another thing. God knows they have much to digest!

The clergy I pass by. Their profundity of erudition, and their liberality of sentiment; their total want of pride, and their detestation of hypocrisy, are so proverbially notorious, as to place them far, far above either my praise or censure.

I was going to mention a man of worth, whom I have the honour to call friend, the laird of Craigdarroch; but I have spoken to the landlord of the King's arms inn here, to have, at the next county-meeting, a large two-milk cheese on the table, for the benefit of the Dumfriesshire whigs, to enable them to digest the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct.

I have just this moment an opportunity

* A club of choice spirits.

of a private hand to Edinburgh, as perhaps you would not digest double postage.

LXIV.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Edinb'g, June 30, 1788.

My dear Sir,

I just now received your brief epistle; and to take vengeance on your laziness, I have, you see, taken a long sheet of writing paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vexed at the affair of the . . . but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master and friend's death. I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying, except he has been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life, that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal; but he is dropt into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a voracious, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food, that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes, by his silly, garrulous prurience. I know it has been a fault of

my own too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend, forsooth, to crack their jokes on prudence; but it is a squalid vagabond glorying in his rags. Still, imprudence respecting money matters is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same little dissingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegrative depravity of principle, in the hackneyed victims of profusion, as in the unfeeling children of parsimony.

I have every possible reverence for the much talked-of world beyond the grave; and I wish that which piety believes and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact. But in things belonging to and terminating in this present scene of existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the distinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the abject corner of insignificance—whether he shall wanton under the tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy convenience, or starve in the arctic circle of dreary poverty—whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret and remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally to sermonize too. I wish you would, in charity, favour me with a sheet full in your own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bollingbroke writes to Dean Swift: "Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely: make an effort to love me with all mine!" Humble servant, and all that trumpery,

is now such a prostituted business, that honest friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple—Farewell.

LIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, Aug. 2, 1788.

Honoured Madam,

Your kind letter welcomed me yesterday to Ayrshire. I am indeed seriously angry with you at the quantum of your *luck-penny*; but vexed and hurt as I was, I could not help laughing very heartily at the noble Lord's apology for the missed napkin.

I would write you from Nithsdale, and give you my direction there, but I have scarce an opportunity of calling at a post-office once in a fortnight. I am six miles from Dumfries, am scarcely ever in it myself, and, as yet, have little acquaintance in the neighbourhood. Besides, I am now very busy on my farm, building a dwelling-house; as at present I am almost an evangelical man in Nithsdale, for I have scarce "where to lay my head."

There are some passages in your last that brought tears in my eyes. "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith." The repository of these "sorrows of the heart," is a kind of *sanctum sanctorum*; and it is only a chosen friend, and that too at particular, sacred times, who dares enter into them.

"Heaven oft tears the bosom chords,
That nature fleetly strung."

You will excuse this quotation for the sake of the author. Instead of entering on this subject farther, I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a hermitage

belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the Muses have conferred on me in that country.

Thou whom chance, &c. See p. 192.

Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following were the production of yesterday as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my excise hopes depend, Mr Graham of Fintry, one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but, I will dare to say it, of this age. The following are just the first crude thoughts, "unhousell'd, unanointed, unanuncul'd!"

[Here follows part of his first poetical Epistle to Mr. Graham. See the Poem entire, p. 145 and 149.]

Here the muse left me. I am astonished at what you tell me of Anthony's writing me. I never received it. Poor fellow! you vex me much by telling me that he is unfortunate. I shall be in Ayrshire ten days from this date. I have just room for an old Roman—*Farewell!*

LXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Maschline, Aug. 10, 1789.

My much honoured Friend,

Yours of the 24th June is before me. I found it, as well as another valued friend—my wife, waiting to welcome me to Ayrshire. I met both with the sincerest pleasure.

When I write you, Madam, I do not sit down to answer every paragraph of yours, by echoing every sentiment, like the faithful commons of Great Britain in

Parliament assembled, answering a speech from the best of kings. I express myself in the fulness of my heart, and may perhaps be guilty of neglecting some of your kind inquiries; but not, from your very odd reason, that I do not read your letters. All your epistles for several months have cost me nothing except a swelling throb of gratitude, or a deep-felt sentiment of veneration.

Mrs. Burns, Madam, is the identical woman.

When she first found herself "as women wish to be who love their lords," as I loved her nearly to distraction, we took steps for a private marriage. Her parents got the hint; and not only forbade me her company and the house, but on my rumoured West Indian voyage, got a warrant to put me in jail, till I should find security in my about-to-be paternal relation. You know my lucky reverse of fortune. On my exultant return to Maschline, I was made very welcome to visit my girl. The usual consequences began to betray her; and as I was at that time laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was turned—literally turned out of doors. I wrote to a friend to shelter her till my return, when our marriage was declared. Her happiness or misery was in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

I can easily fancy a more agreeable companion for my journey of life; but, upon my honour, I have never seen the individual instance.

Circumstanced as I am, I could never have got a female partner for life, who could have entered into my favourite studies, relished my favourite authors, &c., without probably entailing on me, at the same time, expensive living, fan-

tastic caprice, perhaps apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements, which (*pardonnez-moi, Madame*) are sometimes to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misce of the would-be gentry.

I like your way in your church yard lucubrations. Thoughts that are the spontaneous result of accidental situations, either respecting health, place, or company, have often a strength, and always an originality, that would in vain be looked for in fancied circumstances and studied paragraphs. For me, I have often thought of keeping a letter, in *progrès*, by me, to send you when the sheet was written out. Now I talk of sheets, I must tell you my reason for writing to you on paper of this kind, is my prudence of writing to you at large. A page of post is on such a dissocial, narrow-minded scale, that I cannot abide it; and double letters, at least in my miscellaneous reverie-manner, are a monstrous tax in a close correspondence.

LXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, August 16, 1788.

I am in a fine disposition, my honoured friend, to send you an elegiac epistle; and want only genius to make it quite Shenstonian.

"Why droops my heart with fancied woes
Forlorn?"

"Why sinks my soul beneath each wintry sky?"

My increasing cares in this, as yet, strange country—gloomy conjectures in the dark vista of futurity—consciousness

of my own inability for the struggle of the world—my broadened mark to misfortune in a wife and children;—I could indulge these reflections, till my humour should ferment into the most acid chagrin, that would corrode the very thread of life.

To counterwork these baneful feelings I have sat down to write to you; as I declare upon my soul, I always find *that* the most sovereign balm for my wounded spirit.

I was yesterday at Mr. —'s to dinner, for the first time. My reception was quite to my mind; from the lady of the house quite flattering. She sometimes hits on a couplet or two, *impromptu*. She repeated one or two to the admiration of all present. My suffrage, as a professional man, was expected. I for once went agonizing over the belly of my conscience. Pardon me, ye, my adored household gods—Independence of Spirit, and Integrity of Soul! In the course of conversation, Johnson's *Musical Museum*, a collection of Scottish songs with the music, was talked of. We got a song on the harpsichord, beginning,

"Raving winds around her blowing."

The air was much admired; the lady of the house asked me whose were the words: "Mine, Madam—they are indeed my very best verses;" she took not the smallest notice of them! The old Scottish proverb says well, "King's call is better than tither folk's corn." I was going to make a New Testament quotation about "casting pearls;" but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste.

After all that has been said on the other side of the question, man is by no

means a happy creature. I do not speak of the selected few favoured by partial Heaven; whose souls are tuned to gladness, amid riches and honours, and prudence and wisdom. I speak of the neglected many, whose nerves, whose sinews, whose days, are sold to the millions of fortune.

If I thought you had never seen it, I would transcribe for you a stanza of an old Scottish ballad, called *The Life and Age of Man*—beginning thus—

" 'Twas in the sixteenth hundred year
Of God and 687 three,
Free Christ was born, that brought us dear,
As writings testify."

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time, his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of *The Life and Age of Man*.*

It is this way of thinking, it is these melancholy truths, that make religion so precious to the poor miserable children of men—if it is a mere phantom, existing only in the heated imagination of enthusiasm,

"What truth on earth so precious as the lie?"

My idle reasonings sometimes make me a little sceptical, but the necessities of my heart always give the cold philosophy the lie. Who looks for the heart weaned from the earth—the soul affianced to her God—the correspondence fixed with heaven—the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn—who thinks to meet with these in the court, the palace, in the glare of public

life! No; to find them in their precious importance and divine efficacy, we must search among the obscure recesses of disappointment, affliction, poverty, and distress.

I am sure, dear Madam, you are now more than pleased with the length of my letters. I return to Ayrshire middle of next week; and it quickens my pace to think that there will be a letter from you waiting me there. I must be here again very soon for my harvest.

LXVIII.

TO MR. BRUGG,

ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

Edinburg, Sept. 9, 1788.

My dear Sir,

There is not in Edinburgh above the number of the Graces whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the third instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on my farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called *social communication*, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and casting. Praise they only know in graces, prayers, &c.; and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my old capricious but good-natured humy of a muse—

By banks of Nith I sat and wept,
When Colia I thought on,
In mien thereof I hung my harp
The willow trees upon.

I am generally about half my time in Ayrshire with my "darling Jean," and

* This poem will be found in the APPENDIX.

then I, at *lucid intervals*, throw my horny fist across my bescobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning-wheel.

I will send you *The Fortunate Shepherdess* as soon as I return to Ayrshire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for any thing it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue: it is purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me I should be extremely happy; that is to say, if you neither keep nor look out for a regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being obliged to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works: it was a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do me one thing? Whenever you finish any head I could like to have a copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but as what every body knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

LXIX.

TO MISS CHALMERS,
EDINBURGH.

Edinburgh, near Dornfries,
Sept. 16, 1788.

Where are you, and how are you, and is Lady M'Kenzie recovering her health?

for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and, for my part—

"When thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skill part from my right hand!"

"My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea." I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows—rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark or impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much a *D'egard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness. I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two, whose esteem flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say, more, but so much as Lady M'Kenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest, of human kind—unfortunate, even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days, than I can do with almost any body I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child! If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert. I am secure against that crushing grip of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and parity of, I fear, the noblest souls; and a late important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities, which, however overlooked in fashionable licence, or varnished in fashionable phrase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of villainy.

Shortly after my last return to Ayr-

shire, I married "my Jean." This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multi-form curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus bonnete homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse. I must except also from this list, a certain late publication of Scots Poems, which she has perused very devoutly; and all the ballads in the country, as she has (O the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "wood-note wild" I ever heard. I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death, by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect, but I believe, in time, it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *exile*, and bind every day after my repasts.

To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for

any emergency of fortune. If I could set *all* before your view, whatever disrespect you, in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my *idits*. *Adieu* to *James*

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail: I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the idle gewgaws of wealth, or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When fellow-partakers of the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at every thing dishonest, and the same scorn at every thing unworthy, if they are not in the dependence of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense are they not *equal*? And if the bias, the instinctive bias of their souls run the same way, why may they not be *friends*?

When I may have an opportunity of sending you this, Heaven only knows. Shenstone says, "When one is confined idle within doors by bad weather, the best antidote against *ennui* is, to read the letters of, or write to one's friends;" in that case then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately, to wit, since harvest began, wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pincin in that way. I will send you a copy of it, when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large poetic works; how the superstructure will come on I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—time. Johnson's collection of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and of consequence finds me a consumpt for a great deal of idle metre. One of the most tolerable things I have done in that

way, is, two stanzas that I made to an air, a musical gentleman* of my acquaintance composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the seventh of November. Take it as follows :

The day returns, &c. See p. 191.

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit, before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty—*Farewell!*

To make some amends, *mes cheres Mesdames*, for dragging you on to this second sheet; and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some of my late poetical bagatelles, though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day, in an Hermitage on the Banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as to give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows; supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

Then whom chance, &c. See p. 192.

LXX.

TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ.

OF FINTREY.

Sir,

Without date.

When I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole-house, I did not think so soon of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakspeare, asks old Kent why he wished to be in his service, he answers, "Because you have that in your

* Captain Riddell of Glenriddell.

face which I could like to call master." For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with any thing like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life in the character of a country-farmer; but, after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner, which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last and often best friend, rescued him.

I know, Sir, that to need your goodness is to have a claim on it; may I therefore beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division, where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.

[Here follows the Poet's first poetical epistle to Mr. Graham of Fintrey. See p. 146.]

LXXI.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

Mauchline, Oct. 1, 1788.

I have been here in this country about three days, and all that time my chief reading has been the "Address to Loch-

Lomond," you were so obliging as to send to me. Were I impanelled one of the author's jury to determine his criminality respecting the sin of poetry, my verdict should be "Guilty! A poet of Nature's making." It is an excellent method for improvement, and what I believe every poet does, to place some favourite classic author, in his own walks of study and composition, before him as a model. Though your author had not mentioned the name, I could have, at half a glance, guessed his model to be Thomson. Will my brother-poet forgive me, if I venture to hint, that his imitation of that immortal bard is, in two or three places, rather more servile than such a genius as his required.—*c. p.*

To sooth the madding passions all to peace.
ANDREWS.

To sooth the throbbing passions into peace.
THOMSON.

I think the *Address* is, in simplicity, harmony, and elegance of versification, fully equal to the *Seasons*. Like Thomson, too, he has looked into nature for himself; you meet with no copied description. One particular criticism I made at first reading; in no one instance has he said too much. He never flags in his progress, but, like a true poet of Nature's making, kindles in his course. His beginning is simple and modest, as if distrustful of the strength of his pinion; only, I do not altogether like—

" Truth,
The soul of every song that's nobly great."

Fiction is the soul of many a song that is nobly great. Perhaps I am wrong; this may be but a prose criticism. Is not the phrase in page 6, line 7, "Great lake," too much vulgarised by every-day language, for so sublime a poem?

" Great mass of waters, theme for nobler song,"

is perhaps no emendation. His enumera-

tion of a comparison with other lakes is at once harmonious and poetic. Every reader's ideas must sweep the

" Winding margin of an hundred miles."

The perspective that follows—mountains blue—the imprisoned billows beating in vain—the wooded lakes—the digression on the yew-tree—" Ben Lomond's lofty cloud-envelop'd head," &c. are beautiful. A thunder-storm is a subject which has been often tried; yet our poet, in his grand picture, has interjected a circumstance, so far as I know, entirely original.

" The gloom
Deep seam'd with frequent wrecks of moving fire."

In his preface to the storm, " The gleam, how dark between!" is noble high-land landscape! The "rain ploughing the red mould," too, is beautifully fancied. Ben Lomond's "lofty pathless top," is a good expression; and the surrounding view from it is truly great: the

" Silver mist
Beneath the beaming sun,"

is well described; and here he has contrived to enliven his poem with a little of that passion which bids fair, I think, to usurp the modern muses altogether. I know not how far this episode is a beauty upon the whole; but the swain's wish to carry "some faint idea of the vision bright," to entertain her "partial listening ear," is a pretty thought. But, in my opinion, the most beautiful passages in the whole poem are the fowls crowding, in wintry frosts, to Loch Lomond's "hospitable flood;" their wheeling round, their lighting, mixing, diving, &c.; and the glorious description of the sportsman. This last is equal to any thing in the *Seasons*. The idea of "the floating tribes distant seen, far glistening to the moon," provoking his eye as he is obliged to

leave them, is a noble ray of poetic genius. "The howling winds," the "hideous roar" of "the white cascades," are all in the same style.

I forget that, while I am thus holding forth, with the heedless warmth of an enthusiast, I am, perhaps, tiring you with nonsense. I must, however, mention, that the last verse of the sixteenth page, is one of the most elegant compliments I have ever seen. I must likewise notice that beautiful paragraph, beginning, "The gleaming lake," &c. I dare not go into the particular beauties of the two last paragraphs, but they are admirably fine, and truly Ossianic.

I must beg your pardon for this lengthened scrawl. I had no idea of it when I began—I should like to know who the author is; but, whoever he be, present him with my grateful thanks for the entertainment he has afforded me.*

A friend of mine desired me to commission for him two books, *Letters on the Religion essential to Man*, a book you sent me before; and, *The World Unmasked, or the Philosopher the greatest Cheat*. Send me them by the first opportunity. The *Bible* you sent me is truly elegant. I only wish it had been in two volumes.

LXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
AT MORRIS HALLS.

Marchline, Nov. 3, 1788.

Madam,

I had the very great pleasure of dining at Dunlop yesterday. Men are said to flat-

* The poem, entitled, "An Address to Loch-Lomond," is said to have been written by one of the Masters of the High-school at Edinburgh; and the same who translated the beautiful story of "The Fairie," as published in "The Bee" of Dr. Anderson.

ter women because they are weak; if it is so, poets must be weaker still; for Misses R. and K., and Miss G. M'K., with their flattering attentions and artful compliments, absolutely turned my head. I own they did not lard me over as many a poet does his patroness; but they so intoxicated me with their sly insinuations and delicate insinuations of compliment, that if it had not been for a lucky recollection, how much additional weight and lustre your good opinion and friendship must give me in that circle, I had certainly looked upon myself as a person of no small consequence. I dare not say one word how much I was charmed with the Major's friendly welcome, elegant manner, and acute remark, lest I should be thought to balance my orientalism of applause over against the finest quay in Ayrshire, which he made me a present of to help and adorn my farm stock. As it was on Hallowday, I am determined annually, as that day returns, to decorate her horns with an ode of gratitude to the family of Dunlop.

So soon as I know of your arrival at Dunlop, I will take the first conveyancy to dedicate a day, or perhaps two, to you and friendship, under the guarantee of the Major's hospitality. There will be soon threescore and ten miles of permanent distance between us: and now that your friendship and friendly correspondence is entwisted with the heart-strings of my enjoyment of life, I must indulge myself in a happy day of "The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

LXIIII.

TO MR. ———.

Sir,

Nov. 8, 1788.

Notwithstanding the opprobrious epithets with which some of our philoso-

phers and gloomy sectaries have branded our nature—the principle of universal selfishness, the proneness to all evil, they have given us; still the detestation in which inhumanity to the distressed, or insolence to the fallen are held by all mankind, shows that they are not natives of the human heart. Even the unhappy partner of our kind, who is undone, the bitter consequences of his follies or his crimes;—who but sympathizes with the miseries of this ruined profligate brother! We forget the injuries, and feel for the man.

I went, last Wednesday, to my parish church, most cordially to join in grateful acknowledgments to the *Author of all Good*, for the consequent blessings of the glorious Revolution. To that auspicious event we owe no less than our liberties, civil and religious; to it we are likewise indebted for the present Royal Family; the ruling features of whose administration have ever been mildness to the subject, and tenderness of his rights.

Bred and educated in revolution principles, the principles of reason and common sense, it could not be any silly political prejudice which made my heart revolt at the harsh, abusive manner in which the reverend gentleman mentioned the House of Stewart, and which, I am afraid, was too much the language of the day. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils, without cruelly raking up the ashes of those whose misfortune it was, perhaps as much as their crime, to be the authors of those evils; and we may bless God for all his goodness to us as a nation, without, at the same time, cursing a few ruined, powerless exiles, who only harboured ideas, and made attempts, that most of us would have done had we been in their situation.

Stewart," may be said with propriety and justice when compared with the present Royal Family, and the sentiments of our days; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stewarts more attentive to their subjects' rights? Might not the epithets of "bloody and tyrannical" be, with at least equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or any other of their predecessors?

The simple state of the case, Sir, seems to be this:—At that period, the science of government, the knowledge of the true relation between king and subject, was, like other sciences and other knowledge, just in its infancy, emerging from dark ages of ignorance and barbarity.

The Stewarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying; but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation and the rights of subjects.

In this contest between prince and people, the consequence of that light of science which had lately dawned over Europe, the monarch of France, for example, was victorious over the struggling liberties of his people; with us, luckily, the monarch failed, and his unwarrantable pretensions fell a sacrifice to her rights and happiness. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the jostling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but, likewise, happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call of a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the covenanted terms which placed them there.

⁴¹ The bloody and tyrannical House of

The Stewarts have been condemned

and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1713 and 1743. That they failed, I bless God; but cannot join in the ridicule against them. Who does not know that the abilities or defects of leaders and commanders are often hidden, until put to the touchstone of exigency; and that there is a caprice of fortune, an omnipotence in particular accidents and conjunctures of circumstances, which exalt us as heroes, or brand us as madmen, just as they are for or against us?

Now, Mr. Publisher, is a strange, weak, inconsistent being; who would believe, Sir, that in this, our Augustan age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them—that a certain people under our national protection, should complain, not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our whole legislative body, for similar oppressions, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the House of Stewart! I will not, I cannot enter into the merits of the cause, but I dare say the American Congress, in 1776, will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1689; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stewart.

To conclude, Sir; let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity, feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman), who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil over the

fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers.*

LXXIV.

TO MISS DAVIES,

A young Lady who had heard he had been making a Ballad on her, with that Ballad.

Madam, December, 1788.

I understand my very worthy neighbour, Mr. Riddell, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something so provoking in the idea of being the burden of a ballad, that I do not think Job or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was; so my worthy friend has done me a mischief, which, I dare say, he never intended; and reduced me to the unfortunate alternative of leaving your curiosity unsatisfied, or else disgusting you with foolish verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman who had some genius, much eccentricity, and considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental groups of life into which one is thrown, whenever this gentleman met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, as he said, as a *safe bene* to point out the agreeable recollections of his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, is my muse to me: and the verses I do myself the honour to send you are a *memento* exactly of the same kind that he indulged in.

It may be more owing to the fastidi-

* This letter was sent to the publisher of some newspaper, probably to David Ramsay, printer of "The Edinburgh Evening Courant."

ousness of my caprice, than the delicacy of my taste, but I am so often tired, disgusted, and hurt, with the insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person "after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts upon my fancy like inspiration; and I can no more resist rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A dithich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were grey-bearded age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment, are equally striking and unaffected, by heavens! though I had lived threescore years a married man, and threescore years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea; and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.*

LXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, Dec. 17, 1788.

My dear honoured Friend,

Yours, dated Edinburgh, which I have just read, makes me very unhappy. "Almost blind, and wholly deaf," are melancholy news of human nature! but when told of a much loved and honoured friend, they carry misery in the sound. Goodness on your part, and gratitude on mine, began a tie, which has gradually and strongly entwisted itself among the dearest chords of my bosom; and I tremble at the omens of your late and present ailing habits and shattered health. You miscalculate matters widely, when you forbid my waiting on you, lest it should

hurt my worldly concerns. My small scale of farming is exceedingly more simple and easy than what you have lately seen at Moreham Mains. But be that as it may, the heart of the man, and the fancy of the poet, are the two grand considerations for which I live; if mry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once, and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods, and picking up grubs; not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time.—If you continue so deaf, I am afraid a visit will be no great pleasure to either of us; but if I hear you are got so well again as to be able to relish conversation, look you to it, Madam, for I will make my threatnings good. I am to be at the new-year-day fair of Ayr, and by all that is sacred in the word Friend! I *will* come and see you.

.....

Your meeting, which you so well describe, with your old school-fellow and friend, was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world!—they spoil these "social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the "men of the world" would have met with little more heart-workings than two old hacks worn out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase, "*Auld lang syne*," exceedingly expressive.—There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs; I shall give you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr. Kerr will save you the postage.*

Light be the turf on the breast of the Heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment! There is more of the

* See p. 211.

* See Letters to George Thompson, No. xxvi.

fire of native genius in it than half a dozen of modern English Bacchanals. Now I am on my hobby-horse, I cannot help inserting two other old stanzas which please me mightily.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine. See p. 217.

LXXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, New-Year Day Morning.

This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes; and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self enjoyment, should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day, the first Sunday of May, a breezy blue-skied noon, some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn;—these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the *Spectator*, "The Vision of Mirza;" a piece that struck my fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables. "On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep

holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Ragdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing. Are we a piece of machinery, which like the *Æolian harp*, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.

LXXVII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, Jan. 4, 1789.

Sir,

As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary

sized statue offering at a conversation with the Rhodian Colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarries somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have, at last, got some business with you, and business letters are written by the style book. I say my business is with you, Sir, for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late *adieu* was owing to the singularity of my situation, and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the Muse's trade, is a gift bestowed by Him, "who forms the secret bias of the soul;"—but I as firmly believe, that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poetry I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses, in a good measure, the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend—not only of abilities to judge, but with good nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic

distresses—heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I enclose you an essay of mine in a walk of poetry to me entirely new; I mean the epistle addressed to R. G. Esq. or Robert Graham, of Fintry, Esq. a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story; and to give you the one I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of—

I believe I shall, in whole (one hundred pounds copy-right included), clear about four hundred some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentleman has yet to settle with me. I give you this information, because you did me the honour to interest yourself much in my welfare.

To give the rest of my story in brief, I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm; with the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied; with the last, it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who supports my aged mother; another still younger brother, and three sisters, in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh, it cost me about one hundred and eighty pounds to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much—I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part; I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged; and I thought that throwing a little filial piety, and fraternal affection, into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the grand reckoning. There is still one thing would

make my circumstances quite easy; I have an excise officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the commissioners of excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, &c.

Thus secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet poetry, delightful maid!" I would consecrate my future days.

LXIVIII.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD
STEWART.

Edinburg, near Dumfries, Jan. 20, 1789.

Sir,

The enclosed sealed packet I sent to Edinburgh a few days after I had the happiness of meeting you in Ayrshire, but you were gone for the continent. I have added a few more of my productions, those for which I am indebted to the Nithdale Muses. The piece inscribed to R. G. Esq. is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham, of Fintry, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter, to me, of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted, for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This poem is a species of composition new to me; but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the "Poet's Progress." These fragments, if my design succeeds, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years; of course I do not wish it much known. The fragment, beginning "A

little, upright, pert, tart,"* &c., I have not shown to man living, till now I send it you. It forms the postulate, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching; but lest idle conjecture should pretend to point out the original, please let it be for your single, sole inspection.

Need I make any apology for this trouble to a gentleman, who has treated me with such marked benevolence and peculiar kindness; who has entered into my interests with so much zeal, and on whose critical decisions I can so fully depend? A poet as I am by trade, these decisions to me are of the last consequence. My late transient acquaintance among some of the mere rank and file of greatness, I resign with ease: but to the distinguished champions of genius and learning, I shall be ever ambitious of being known. The native genius and accurate discernment in Mr. Stewart's critical strictures; the justice (iron justice, for he has no bowels of compassion for a poor poetic sinner) of Dr. Gregory's remarks, and the delicacy of Professor Dalziel's taste, I shall ever revere. I shall be in Edinburgh some time next month.

LXXIX.

TO BISHOP GEDDES.

Edinburg, near Dumfries, Feb. 3, 1789.

Venerable Father,

As I am conscious that, wherever I am, you do me the honour to interest yourself in my welfare, it gives me pleasure to inform you that I am here at last, stationary in the serious business of life, and have now not only the retired lei-

* See p. 92.

sure, but the hearty inclination, to attend to those great and important questions—what I am? where I am? and for what I am destined?

In that first concern, the conduct of the man, there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blamable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by Nature and Nature's God. I was sensible that, to so helpless a creature as a poor poet, a wife and family were incumbrances which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but when the alternative was, being at eternal warfare with myself on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity would, to me, ever justify, I must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice.

In the affair of a livelihood, I think myself tolerably secure. I have good hopes of my farm; but should they fail, I have an excise commission, which, on my simple petition, will at any time procure me bread. There is a certain stigma affixed to the character of an excise officer, but I do not intend to borrow honour from any profession; and though the salary be comparatively small, it is great to any thing that the first twenty-five years of my life taught me to expect.

enable me to produce something worth preserving.

You will see in your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of Nith. Some large poetic plans that are floating in my imagination, or partly put in execution, I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting with you, which, if you are then in Edinburgh, I shall have about the beginning of March.

That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me, you must still allow me to challenge; for with whatever unconcern I give up my transient connexion with the merely great, I cannot lose the patronizing notice of the learned and good without the bitterest regret.

LXXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, March 4, 1789.

Here am I, my honoured friend, returned safe from the capital. To a man who has a home, however humble or remote—if that home is like mine, the scene of domestic comfort—the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust.

"Vain pomp and glory of this world, I leave you."

When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim—"What merit has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the

Thus, with a rational aim and method in life, you may easily guess, my revered and much-honoured friend, that my characteristical trade is not forgotten. I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the muses. I am determined to study man and nature, and in that view, incessantly; and to try if the ripening and corrections of years can

world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride!" I have read somewhere of a monarch (in Spain I think it was) who was so out of *humour* with the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, that he said, had he been of the Creator's council he could have saved him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince's Street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb-sinews of many of his Majesty's liege subjects in the way of tossing the head and tiptoe-strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage, in enabling us at once to adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that too within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature itself requires; as a measuring-glance at its towering altitude would determine the affair like instinct.

You are right, Madam, in your idea of poor Mylne's poem, which he has addressed to me. The piece has a good deal of merit, but it has one great fault—it is by far too long. Besides, my success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish poets, that the very term Scottish poetry borders on the burlesque. When I write to Mr. Carfrae I shall advise him rather to try one of his deceased friend's English pieces. I am prodigiously hurried with my own matters, else I would have requested a perusal of all Mylne's poetic perform-

ances; and would have offered his friends my assistance in either selecting or correcting what would be proper for the press. What it is that occupies me so much, and perhaps a little oppresses my present spirits, shall fill up a paragraph in some future letter.

In the mean time allow me to close this epistle with a few lines done by a friend of mine. I give you them, that, as you have seen the original, you may guess whether one or two alterations I have ventured to make in them, be any real improvement.

Like the fair plant that from our touch with-
draws,
Shrink, mildly fearful, even from applause.
Be all a mother's fondest hope can dream,
And all you are, my charming . . . seem.
Straight as the fox-glove, ere her bells dis-
close,
Mild as the maiden-blushing hawthorn
blows,
Fair as the fairest of each lovely kind,
Your form shall be the image of your mind;
Your manners shall as true your soul ex-
press,
That all shall long to know the worth they
guess;
Congenial hearts shall greet with kindred
love,
And even sick'ning envy must approve.*

LXXII.

TO THE REV. P. CARFRAE.

Reverend Sir,

1789.

I do not recollect that I have ever felt a severer pang of shame, than on looking at the date of your obliging letter which accompanied Mr. Mylne's poem.

I am much to blame. The honour Mr. Mylne has done me, greatly enhanced in

* These lines, we believe, are the production of the lady to whom this letter is addressed.

its value by the endearing, though melancholy circumstance of its being the last production of his muse, deserved a better return.

I have, as you hint, thought of sending a copy of the poem to some periodical publication; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid that, in the present case, it would be an improper step. My success, perhaps as much accidental as merited, has brought an inundation of nonsense under the name of Scottish poetry. Subscription-bills for Scottish poems have so deluged, and daily do deluge the public, that the very name is in danger of contempt. For these reasons, if publishing any of Mr. M.'s poems in a magazine, &c. be at all prudent, in my opinion it certainly should not be a Scottish poem. The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Myne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest which fate has denied himself to reap. But let the friends of Mr. Myne's fame (among whom I crave the honour of ranking myself) always keep in eye his respectability as a man and as a poet, and take no measure that, before the world knows any thing about him, would risk his name and character being classed with the fools of the times.

I have, Sir, some experience of publishing; and the way in which I would proceed with Mr. Myne's poems is this: I would publish, in two or three English and Scottish public papers, any one of his English poems which should, by private judges, be thought the most excellent, and mention it at the same time as one of the productions of a Lothian farmer, of respectable character, lately deceased, whose poems his friends had it in idea to publish soon, by subscription, for the sake of his numerous family; not in pity to that family, but in justice to what his friends think the poetic merits of the de-

ceased; and to secure, in the most effectual manner, to those tender connections, whose right it is, the pecuniary reward of those merits.

LXXXII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Sir, Edinburg, March 23, 1789.

The gentleman who will deliver you this is a Mr. Nielson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourhood, and a very particular acquaintance of mine. As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him. Mr. Nielson is on his way for France, to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him; and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, &c. for him, when he has crossed the Channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honour of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character gives you much pleasure.

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs., of^{*} You probably knew her personally, an honour of which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood; and among her servants and tenants, I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath she was much less blameable. In

* See p. 167.

January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Wigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs., and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest mounds and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poetry and prose sink under me when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire, at New Cumnock, had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately, and settled finally with Mr. Creech; and I must own that, at last, he has been amicable and fair with me.

XXXXXX

TO MR. HILL.

Kilbarnock, April 9, 1789.

I will make no excuses, my dear Bibbopulus, (God forgive me for murdering language!) that I have sat down to write you on this vile paper.

It is economy, Sir; it is that cardinal virtue, prudence; so I beg you will sit down, and either compose or borrow a panegyric. If you are going to borrow, apply to, to compose, or rather to compound,

something very clever on my remarkable frugality—that I write to one of my most esteemed friends on this wretched paper, which was originally intended for the venal fist of some drunken exciseman, to take dirty notes in a miserable vault of an ale-pellar.

O Frugality! thou mother of ten thousand blessings—thou cook of fat beef and dainty greens!—thou manufacturer of warm Shetland hose and comfortable stockings!—thou old housewife, darning thy decayed stockings with thy ancient spectacles on thy aged nose;—lead me, hand me, in thy clutching palsied fist, up those heights, and through those thickets, hitherto inaccessible and impervious to my anxious weary feet:—not those Farnesian crags, bleak and barren, where the hungry worshippers of fame are, breathless, clambering, hanging between heaven and hell; but those glittering cliffs of Potosi, where the all-sufficient, all-powerful deity, Wealth, holds his immediate court of joys and pleasures, where the sunny exposure of plenty and the hot walls of profusion produce those blissful fruits of luxury, exotics in this world, and natives of paradise!—Thou withered sibyl, my sage conductress, usher me into the refulgent, adored presence. The Power, splendid and potent as he now is, was once the pining nursing of thy faithful care and tender arms! Call me thy son, thy cousin, thy kinsman or favourite, and adjure the god, by the scenes of his infant years, no longer to repulse me as a stranger or an alien, but to favour me with his peculiar countenance and protection. He daily bestows his greatest kindnesses on the undeserving and the worthless. Assure him that I bring ample documents of meritorious demerits! Pledge yourself for me, that, for the glorious cause of *Justice*, I will do any thing, be any thing—but the horse-leech of private oppression, or the vulture of public robbery!

But to descend from heros.....

I want a Shakspeare ; I want likewise an English Dictionary—Johnson's, I suppose, is best. In these and all my prose commissions, the cheapest is always the best for me. There is a small debt of honour that I owe Mr. Robert Cleghorn, in Saughton Mille, my worthy friend, and your well-wisher. Please give him, and urge him to take it, the first time you see him, ten shillings worth of any thing you have to sell, and place it to my account.

The library scheme that I mentioned to you is already begun, under the direction of Captain Riddell. There is another in emulation of it going on at Cloosburn, under the auspices of Mr. Monteith, of Cloosburn, which will be on a greater scale than ours. Captain Riddell gave his infant society a great many of his old books, etc I had written you on that subject ; but, one of these days, I shall trouble you with a commission for "The Monkland Friendly Society"—a copy of *The Spectator*, *Mirror*, and *Leaenger*, *Man of Feeling*, *Man of the World*, *Guthrie's Geographical Grammar*, with some religious pieces, will likely be our first order.

When I grow richer, I will write to you on gift post to make amends for this sheet. At present, every guinea has a five guinea errand with,

My dear Sir,

Your faithful, poor, but honest friend,

R. B.

LXXXIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, April 2, 1768.

I no sooner hit on any poetic plan or fancy, but I wish to send it to you ; and

if knowing and reading these give half the pleasure to you, that communicating them to you gives to me, I am satisfied.

I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe, to the right hon. Charles James Fox ; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough-sketched as follows :—

On the twentieth current I hope to have the honour of assuring you in person, how sincerely I am—

LXXXV.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Edinburgh, May 4, 1768.

My dear Sir,

Your duty free favour, of the 26th of April, I received two days ago. I will not say I perused it with pleasure ; that is the cold compliment of ceremony ; I perused it, Sir, with delicious satisfaction—in short, it is such a letter, that not you nor your friend, but the legislature, by express proviso in their postage laws, should frank. A letter informed with the soul of friendship is such an honour to human nature, that they should order it free ingress and egress to and from their bags and mails, as an encouragement and mark of distinction to supermineral virtue.

I have just put the last hand to a little poem which I think will be something to your taste. † One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields sowing some

* See p. 92.

† See p. 104.

grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when they all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying, for our sport, individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue.

Let me know how you like my poem. I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one, altogether.

C—— is a glorious production of the Author of man. You, he, and the noble Colonel of the C—— F—— are to me

"Dear as the ruddy drops which warm my
brow."

I have a good mind to make verses on you all, to the tune of "*Three gude fellows ayont the glen*."

LXXXVI.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

Mauchline, May 21, 1759.

My dear friend,

I was in this country by accident, and hearing of your safe arrival, I could not resist the temptation of wishing you joy on your return—wishing you would write me before you sail again—wishing you would always set me down as your bosom friend—wishing you long life and prosperity, and that every good thing may attend you—wishing Mrs. Brown and your little ones as free of the evils of

this world, as is consistent with humanity—wishing you and she were to make two at the ensuing lying-in, with which Mrs. B. threatens very soon to favour me—wishing that I had longer time to write to you at present; and, finally—wishing that if there is to be another state of existence, Mrs. Br. Mrs. B. our little ones, and both families, and you and I, in some snug retreat, may make a jovial party to all eternity!

My direction is at Ellisland near Dumfries.

LXXXVII.

TO MR. M'AULEY,

DUMFRIES.

Dear Sir,

June 4, 1759.

Though I am not without my fears respecting my fate at that grand, universal inquest of right and wrong, commonly called *The Last Day*, yet I trust there is one sin, which that arch vagabond, Satan, who I understand is to be king's evidence, cannot throw in my teeth, I mean ingratitude. There is a certain pretty large quantum of kindness, for which I remain, and from inability, I fear must still remain, your debtor; but, though unable to repay the debt, I assure you, Sir, I shall ever warmly remember the obligation. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear, by my old acquaintance, Mr. Kennedy, that you are, in immortal Allan's language, "hale and weel, and living;" and that your charming family are well, and promising to be an amiable and respectable addition to the company of performers, whom the great Manager of the drama of man is bringing into action for the succeeding age.

With respect to my welfare, a subject

in which you once warmly and effectively interested yourself, I am here in my old way, holding my plough, marking the growth of my corn, or the health of my dairy; and at times sauntering by the delightful windings of the Nith, on the margin of which I have built my humble domicile, praying for seasonable weather, or holding an intrigue with the muses, the only gipsies with whom I have now any intercourse. As I am entered into the holy state of matrimony, I trust my face is turned completely Zion-ward; and as it is a rule with all honest fellows to repeat no grievances, I hope that the little poetic licences of former days will of course fall under the oblivious influence of some good-natured statute of celestial proscription. In my family devotion, which, like a good presbyterian, I occasionally give to my household folks, I am extremely fond of the psalm, "Let not the errors of my youth," &c., and that other, "Lo, children are God's heritage," &c.; in which last Mrs. Burns, who, by the by, has a glorious "wood-note wild" at either old songs or psalmody, joins me with the pathos of Handel's Messiah.

XXXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Elisland, June 21, 1789.

My dear Madam,

Will you take the effusions, the miserable effusions, of low spirits, just as they flow from their bitter spring? I know not of any particular cause for this worst of all my foes besetting me, but for some time my soul has been beclouded with the thickening atmosphere of evil imaginations and gloomy presages.

Monday Evening.

I have just heard give a sermon. He is a man famous for his benevolence, and I revere him; but from such ideas of my creator, good Lord, deliver me! Religion, my honoured friend, is surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich. That there is an incomprehensible Great Being, to whom I owe my existence, and that he must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery, and consequent outward deportment, of this creature which he has made; these are, I think, self-evident propositions. That there is a real and eternal distinction between virtue and vice, and, consequently, that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave—must, I think, be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment's reflection. I will go farther, and affirm, that from the sublimity, excellence, and purity, of his doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the aggregated wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though, *in appearance*, he himself was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species; therefore Jesus Christ was from God.

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.

What think you, Madam, of my creed? I trust that I have said nothing that will lessen me in the eye of one whose good opinion I value almost next to the approbation of my own mind.

LXXXIX.

TO MR. ———.

My dear Sir, August, 1793.

The hurry of a farmer in this particular season, and the indolence of a poet at all times and seasons, will, I hope, plead my excuse for neglecting so long to answer your obliging letter of the fifth of August.

That you have done well in quitting your laborious concern is I do not doubt; the weighty reasons you mention were, I hope, very, and deservedly, indeed, weighty ones, and your health is a matter of the last importance; but whether the remaining proprietors of the paper have also done well, is what I much doubt. The, so far as I was a reader, exhibited such a brilliancy of point, such an elegance of paragraph, and such a variety of intelligence, that I can hardly conceive it possible to continue a daily paper in the same degree of excellence; but, if there was a man who had abilities equal to the task, that man's assistance the proprietors have lost.

When I received your letter, I was transcribing for, my letter to the magistrates of the Canongate, Edinburgh, begging their permission to place a tombstone over poor Fergusson, and their edict, in consequence of my petition; but now I shall send them to Poor Fergusson! If there be a life beyond the grave, which I trust there is; and if there be a good God presiding over all nature, which I am sure there is; thou art now enjoying existence in a glorious world, where worth of the heart alone is distinction in the man; where riches, deprived of all their pleasure-purchasing powers, return to their

native sordid matter; where titles and honours are the disregarded reveries of an idle dream; and where that heavy virtue, which is the negative consequence of steady dulness, and those thoughtless, though often destructive follies, which are the unavoidable aberrations of frail human nature, will be thrown into equal oblivion as if they had never been.

Adieu, my dear Sir! So soon as your present views and schemes are concentrated in an aim, I shall be glad to hear from you; as your welfare and happiness is by no means a subject indifferent to

Yours, &c.

XC.

TO MISS WILLIAMS.

Madam,

1793.

Of the many problems in the nature of that wonderful creature, Man, this is one of the most extraordinary, that he shall go on from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, or perhaps from year to year, suffering a hundred times more in an hour from the impotent consciousness of neglecting what he ought to do, than the very doing of it would cost him. I am deeply indebted to you, first for a most elegant poetic compliment; then for a polite obliging letter; and lastly, for your excellent poem on the Slave trade; and yet, wretch that I am! though the debts were debts of honour, and the creditor a lady, I have put off and put off even the very acknowledgment of the obligation, until you must indeed be the very angel I take you for, if you can forgive me.

Your poem I have read with the highest pleasure. I have a way, whenever I read a book, I mean a book in our own trade, Madam, a poetic one, and when it

is my own property, that I take a pencil and mark at the ends of verses, or note on margins and odd paper, little criticisms of approbation or disapprobation as I peruse along. I will make no apology for presenting you with a few unconnected thoughts that occurred to me in my repeated perusals of your poem. I want to shew you that I have honesty enough to tell you what I take to be truths, even when they are not quite on the side of approbation; and I do it in the firm faith, that you have equal greatness of mind to hear them with pleasure.

I had lately the honour of a letter from Dr. Moore, where he tells me that he has sent me some books. They are not yet come to hand, but I hear they are on the way.

Wishing you all success in your progress in the path of fame; and that you may equally escape the danger of stumbling through incautious speed, or losing ground through halting neglect,

I have the honour to be, &c.

XCI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, Sep. 6, 1789.

I have mentioned, in my last, my appointment to the Exche, and the birth of little Frank, who, by the by, I trust will be no discredit to the honourable name of Wallace, as he has a fine manly countenance, and a figure that might do credit to a little fellow two months older; and likewise an excellent good temper, though, when he pleases, he has a pipe, only not quite so loud as the horn that his immortal namesake blew as a signal to take out the pin of Stirling bridge.

I had some time ago an epistle, part

poetic, and part prosaic, from your poetess, Miss J. Little, a very ingenious but modest composition. I should have written her, as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country; and I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her; I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain. I am no dab at fine drawn letter writing; and except when prompted by friendship or gratitude, or, which happens extremely rarely, inspired by the Muse (I know not her name) that presides over epistolary writing, I sit down, when accosted to write, as I would sit down to beat hemp.

Some parts of your letter of the 30th August struck me with the most melancholy concern for the state of your mind at present.

Would I could write you a letter of comfort! I would sit down to it with as much pleasure as I would to write an epic poem of my own composition that should equal the *Iliad*. Religion, my dear friend, is the true comfort. A strong persuasion is a future state of existence; a proposition so obviously probable, that setting revelation aside, every nation and people, so far as investigation has reached, for at least near four thousand years, have in some mode or other firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but when I reflected that I was opposing the most ardent wishes, and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief, in all ages, I was shocked at my own conduct.

I know not whether I have ever sent you the following lines, or if you have

ever seen them; but it is one of my favourite quotations, which I keep constantly by me in my progress through life, in the language of the Book of Job,

"Against the day of battle and of war"—

spoken of religion,

" 'Tis ruin, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,

'Tis ruin that gilds the horror of our night.

When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;

When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;

'Tis ruin that wards the blow, or stills the smart;

Dharma affliction, or repels his dart;

Within the breast hide purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloud-
less skies."

I have been very busy with *Zeluca*. The Doctor is so obliging as to request my opinion of it; and I have been revolving in my mind some kind of criticisms on novel-writing, but it is a depth beyond my research. I shall, however, digest my thoughts on the subject as well as I can. *Zeluca* is a most sterling performance.

Farewell! *Adieu, Je bon Dieu je vous commende!*

XCII.

TO CAPT. RIDDELL,

CARIE.

Sir, Ellisland, Oct. 16, 1789.

Big with the idea of this important day* at Friars Carae, I have watched the elements and skies in the full persuasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent.—Yesternight until a very

* The day on which "The Whistle" was contended for. See p. 220.

late hour did I wait with anxious horror, for the appearance of some Comet firing half the sky; or aerial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians, darting athwart the startled heavens rapid as the ragged lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly; they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical of the three potent heroes, and the mighty claret-shed of the day. For me, as Thomson in his *Winter* says of the storm—I shall "Hear astonished, and astonished sing"

The whistle and the man; Tis he
The man that won the whistle, &c.

"Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trow are we;
And moomy a night we've merry been,
And moomy mae we hope to be.

"Who first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loan is he;
Who has beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king among us three."

To leave the heights of Parnassus and come to the humble vale of prose. I have some misgivings that I take too much upon me, when I request you to get your guest, Sir Robert Lowrie, to frank the two enclosed covers for me, the one of them, to Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, Bart. at Auchenskeith, Kilmarnock—the other, to Mr. Allan Masterton, Writing-Master, Edinburgh. The first has a kindred claim on Sir Robert, as being a brother Baronet, and likewise a keen Foxite; the other is one of the worthiest men in the world, and a man of real genius; so, allow me to say, he has a fraternal claim on you. I want them franked for to-morrow, as I cannot get them to the post to-night. I shall send a servant again for them in the evening. Wishing that your head may

be crowned with laurels to-night, and
free from aches to-morrow,*

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your deeply indebted humble servant.

KCIII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Edinburgh, Nov. 7, 1789.

My dear Friend,

I had written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you, for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edin-

* It appears that Burns was not present at the contest for "The Whistle," although Dr. Currie, with a view to heighten the irregularity of his habits, affirms that he was. "The social parties of the gentlemen of Nicholasdale," says he, "too often seduced him from his rustic labours and his rustic fare, overthrew the unsteady fabric of his resolutions, and inflamed those propensities which temperance might have weakened, and prudence ultimately suppressed. The poem of 'The Whistle' celebrates a Bacchanalian contest where Burns appears as umpire." J. C. Lockhart, with the letter of the Poet before him, in a wretched compilation, which he calls a "Life of Robert Burns," repeats and amplifies the calumny intended to be inferred from the supposed circumstance. "The sturdiest gentry of the country," says he, "whenever they had especial merriment in view, called in the wit and eloquence of Burns to enliven their carousals. The famous song of 'The Whistle of worth' commemorates a scene of this kind, more picturesque in some of its circumstances than every day occurred, yet strictly in character with the usual tenor of life among this jovial squirearchy. Three gentlemen of ancient descent, had met to determine, by a solemn drinking match, who should possess 'The Whistle,' which a common ancestor of them all had earned ages before, in a Bacchanalian contest of the same sort with a noble toger from Denmark; and the Poet was summoned to watch over and celebrate the issue of the debate." What will not such men venture to affirm?

burgh.—Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you, that I am now appointed to an excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeymen excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes an officer of excise; there to flourish and bring forth fruits—worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a poet. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock,—“Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and consequently with us an honest fellow has the surest chance for preferment.”

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with, and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favourable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills; capricious foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills, as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situa-

tion; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily does ruin many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead; and is almost, without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you *will* be both is the firm persuasion of,

My dear Sir, &c.

XCIV.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

Ellisland, Nov. 4, 1789.

I have been so hurried, my ever dear friend, that though I got both your letters, I have not been able to command an hour to answer them as I wished; and, even now, you are to look on this as merely confessing debt, and craving days. Few things could have given me so much pleasure, as the news that you were once more safe and sound on terra firma, and happy in that place where happiness is alone to be found, in the fireside circle. May the benevolent Director of all things peculiarly bless you, in all those endearing connexions, consequent on the tender and venerable names of husband and father! I have indeed been extremely lucky in getting an additional income of fifty pounds a year, while, at the same time, the appointment will not cost me above ten or twelve pounds per annum of expences more than I must inevitably have incurred. The worst circumstance is, that the Excise division which I have

got, is so extensive, no less than ten parishes to ride over; and it abounds, besides, with so much business, that I can scarcely steal a spare moment. However, labour endears rest, and both together are absolutely necessary for the proper enjoyment of human existence. I cannot meet you any where. No less than an order from the Board of Excise at Edinburgh is necessary, before I can have so much time as to meet you in Ayrshire. But do you come and see me. We must have a social day, and perhaps lengthen it out with half the night, before you go again to sea. You are the earliest friend I now have on earth, my brothers excepted; and is not that an endearing circumstance! When you and I first met, we were at a green period of human life. The twig would easily take a bent; but, would as easily return to its former state. You and I not only took a mutual bent, but, by the melancholy, though strong influence of being both of the family of the unfortunate, we were intertwined with one another in our growth towards advanced age; and blasted be the sacrilegious hand that shall attempt to undo the union! You and I must have one bumper to my favourite toast, "May the companions of our youth be the friends of our old age!" Come and see me one year; I shall see you at Port-Glasgow the next; and if we can contrive to have a gossiping between our two bed-fellows, it will be so much additional pleasure. Mrs. Burns joins me in kind compliments to you and Mrs. Brown. Adieu!

I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

XCv.

TO R. GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTREY.

Sir,

Dec. 9, 1789.

I have a good while had a wish to trouble you with a letter, and had cer-

tainly done it long ere now—but for a humiliating something that throws cold water on the resolution, as if one should say, “You have found Mr. Graham a very powerful and kind friend indeed; and that interest he is so kindly taking in your concerns, you ought, by every thing in your power, to keep alive and cherish.” Now though, since God has thought proper to make one powerful and another helpless, the connexion of obliger and obliged is all fair; and though my being under your patronage is to me highly honourable, yet, Sir, allow me to flatter myself, that as a poet and an honest man, you first interested yourself in my welfare, and, principally as such, still, you permit me to approach you.

I have found the excise business go on a great deal smoother with me than I expected: owing a good deal to the generous friendship of Mr. Mitchell, my collector, and the kind assistance of Mr. Findlater, my supervisor. I dare to be honest, and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondence with the Muses. Their visits to me, indeed, and I believe to most of their acquaintances, like the visits of good angels, are short and far between; but I meet them now and then as I jog through the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr. I take the liberty to enclose you a few bagatelles, all of them the productions of my leisure thoughts in my excise rides.

If you know, or have ever seen Captain Grose the antiquarian, you will enter into any humour that is in the verses on him. Perhaps you have seen them before, as I sent them to a London newspaper. Though I dare say you have none of the solemn-league-and-covenant fire, which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr.

M’Gill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter-winds. The enclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local, but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced, in my conscience, that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.*

The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of boroughs. I do not believe there will be such a hard-run match in the whole general election.†

I am too little a man to have any political attachments; I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of a country, and who is a character that one cannot speak of with patience.

Sir J. J. does “what man can do;” but yet I doubt his fate.

XCVI.

TO MR. ———.

Dear Sir, Without date.

Whether is the way of my trade, I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor,‡ is

* See p. 163.

† See p. 197. This alludes to the contest for the borough of Dumfries, between the Duke of Queensberry’s interest and that of Sir James Johnston.

‡ Dr. M’Gill, of Ayr.

I fear very doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Alas! I am not a Hector, and the worthy Doctor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence. Good God, Sir! to such a shield, humour is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a school-boy. Creation-digracing *vulgarians* such as they, God only can mend, and the Devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they had all but one neck. I feel impotent as a child to the ardour of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germs of their wicked machinations! O for a poisonous Tornado, winged from the Torrid Zone of Tartarus, to sweep the spreading crop of their villanous contrivances to the lowest hell!

ICVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, December 18, 1799.

Many thanks, dear Madam, for your sheetful of rhymes. Though at present I am below the veriest prose, yet from you every thing pleases. I am groaning under the miseries of a diseased nervous system; a system, the state of which is most conducive to our happiness—or the most productive of our misery. For now near three weeks I have been so ill with a nervous head-ache, that I have been obliged to give up for a time my exercise-books, being scarcely able to lift my head, much less to ride once a week over ten mair parishes. What is man! To-day in the luxuriance of health, exulting in the enjoyment of existence; in a few days, perhaps in a few hours,

loaded with conscious painful being, counting the tardy pace of the lingering moments by the repercussions of anguish, and refusing or denied a comforter. Day follows night, and night comes after day, only to curse him with life which gives him no pleasure; and yet the awful, dark termination of that life, is a something at which he recoils.

"Tell us, ye dead; will none of you in
pity

Disclose the secret.....

What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be!
..... 'tis no matter:

A little time will make us learn'd as you
are."

Can it be possible, that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence! When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me; when the cold, stiffened, unconscious ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and being seen, enjoying and enjoyed! Ye venerable sages, and holy flames, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death; or are they all alike, baseless visions, and fabricated fables! If there is another life, it must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane; what a flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it! There I should meet an aged parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so long and so bravely struggled. There should I meet the friend, the disinterested friend of my early life; the man who rejoiced to see me, because he loved me and could serve me..... Muir,* thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart glowed

* See p. 55.

with every thing generous, manly, and noble;—and if ever emanation from the All-good Being animated a human form, it is thine! There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognise my lost, my ever dear Mary, whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy and love.

My Mary, dear departed shade!

Where is thy place of heavenly rest?

Scant thou thy lover lowly laid;

Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters! I trust thou art no impostor, and that thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave, is not one of the many impositions which, time after time, have been palmed on credulous mankind. I trust that in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed, by being yet connected together in a better world, where every tie that bound heart to heart in this state of existence, shall be, far beyond our present conceptions, more endearing.

I am a good deal inclined to think with those who maintain, that what are called nervous affections are in fact diseases of the mind. I cannot reason, I cannot think; and but to you I would not venture to write any thing above an order to a cobbler. You have felt too much of the ills of life not to sympathize with a diseased wretch, who is impaired more than half of any faculties he possessed. Your goodness will excuse this distracted scrawl, which the writer dare scarcely read, and which he would throw into the fire were he able to write any thing better, or indeed any thing at all.

Rumour told me something of a son of your's who was returned from the East or West Indies. If you have gotten news of James or Anthony, it was cruel in you

not to let me know; as I promise you, on the sincerity of a man who is weary of one world and anxious about another, that scarce any thing could give me so much pleasure as to hear of any good thing befalling my honoured friend.

If you have a minute's leisure, take up your pen in pity to *le pauvre miserable*.
R. B.

ICVIII.

TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.

Sir,

No date.

The following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the statistical account transmitted to you, of the parish of Duncore, in Nithdale. I beg leave to send it to you, because it is new, and may be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge is certainly of very great importance, both to them as individuals, and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection, is giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement; and, besides, raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell, set on foot a species of circulating library, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in any corner of the country; and so useful as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman, who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artisan, a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddell got a number of his own tenants, and farming neighbours, to

form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two, in case of a removal to a distance, or of death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings; and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase, was always decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood for that night first on the list, had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second; and so on to the last.—At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement, the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; and each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddell's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were, *Blair's Sermons*, *Robertson's History of Scotland*, *Hume's History of the Stuarts*, *The Spectator*, *Idler*, *Adventurer*, *Mirror*, *Laugher*, *Observer*,

Man of Feeling, *Man of the World*, *Chrysal*, *Don Quixote*, *Joseph Andrews*, &c. A peasant who can read and enjoy such books, is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour, who perhaps stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much-deserved success,

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A PLAIYST.

XCIX.

TO CHARLES SHARPE, ESQ.

OF ROSSAM.

(Under a Scrivener's Signature, enclosing a Ballad, 1799 or 1791.)

It is true, Sir, you are a gentleman of rank and fortune, and I am a poor devil; you are a feather in the cap of society, and I am a very hobnob in his shoes; yet I have the honour to belong to the same family with you, and on that score I now address you. You will perhaps suspect that I am going to claim affinity with the ancient and honourable house of Kilpatrick: No, no, Sir; I cannot indeed be properly said to belong to any house, or even any province or kingdom; as my mother, who for many years was spouse to a marching regiment, gave me into this bad world, aboard the packet boat, somewhere between Donaghadee and Portpatrick. By our common family, I mean, Sir, the family of the Muses. I am a fiddler and a poet; and you, I am told, play an exquisite violin, and have a standard taste in the Belles Lettres. The other day, a brother catgut gave me a charming Scots air of your composition. If I was pleased with the tune, I was in raptures with the title you have given it; and, taking up the idea, I have spun it

into the three stanzas enclosed. Will you allow me, Sir, to present you them, as the dearest offering that a misbegotten son of poverty and rhyme has to give! I have a longing to take you by the hand and unburden my heart, by saying—"Sir, I honour you as a man who supports the dignity of human nature, amid an age when frivolity and avarice have, between them, debased us below the brutes that perish!" But, alas, Sir! to me you are unapproachable. It is true, the Muses baptized me in Castalian streams, but the thoughtless gipsies forgot to give me a name. As the sex have served many a good fellow, the Nine have given me a great deal of pleasure, but, bewitching jades! they have beggared me. Would they but spare me a little of their cast-linen! were it only to put it in my power to say that I have a shirt on my back! but the idle wenches, like Solomon's lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin;" so I must e'en continue to tie my remnant of a cravat, like the hangman's rope, round my naked throat, and coax my galligaskins to keep together their many-coloured fragments. As to the affair of shoes, I have given that up. My pilgrimages in my ballad-trade from town to town, and on your stony-hearted turn-pikes too, are what not even the hide of Job's Behemoth could bear. The coat on my back is no more; I shall not speak evil of the dead. It would be equally unhandsome and ungrateful to find fault with my old surtout, which so kindly supplies and conceals the want of that coat. My hat indeed is a great favourite; and though I got it literally for an old song, I would not exchange it for the best beaver in Britain. I was, during several years, a kind of factotum servant to a country clergyman, where I picked up a good many scraps of learning, particularly in some branches of the mathematics. Whenever I feel inclined to rest myself on my way, I take my seat under a hedge, laying my poetic wallet on my

one side, and my fiddle-case on the other, and placing my hat between my legs, I can by means of its brim, or rather brims, go through the whole doctrine of the Conic Sections.

However, Sir, do not let me mislead you, as if I would interest your pity. Fortune has so much forsaken me, that she has taught me to live without her; and amid all my rags and poverty, I am as independent, and much more happy than a monarch of the world. According to the hackneyed metaphor, I value the several actors in the great drama of life, simply as they act their parts. I can look on a worthless fellow of a duke with unqualified contempt; and can regard an honest scavenger with sincere respect. As you, Sir, go through your roll with such distinguished merit, permit me to make one in the chorus of universal applause, and assure you that, with the highest respect,

I have the honour to be, &c.

C.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

Edinb., January 11, 1790.

Dear Brother,

I mean to take advantage of the frank, though I have not in my present frame of mind much appetite for exertion in writing. My nerves are in a state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go to hell. I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in *Ayr*, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a

man of apparent worth. On New-year-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause.

No song nor dance, &c. See p. 108.

I can no more. If once I was clear of this . . . farm, I should respire more at ease.

CI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, January 25, 1790.

It has been owing to unremitting hurry of business that I have not written to you, Madam, long ere now. My health is greatly better, and I now begin once more to share in satisfaction and enjoyment with the rest of my fellow creatures.

Many thanks, my much esteemed friend, for your kind letters; but why will you make me run the risk of being contemptible and mercenary in my own eyes? When I pique myself on my independent spirit, I hope it is neither poetic licence nor poetic rant; and I am so flattered with the honour you have done me, in making me your compeer in friendship and friendly correspondence, that I cannot without pain, and a degree of mortification, be reminded of the real inequality between our situations.

Most sincerely do I rejoice with you, dear Madam, in the good news of Anthony. Not only your anxiety about his fate, but my own esteem for such a noble, warm-hearted, manly young fellow, in the little I had of his acquaintance, has interested me deeply in his fortunes.

Falconer, the unfortunate author of

The Shipwreck, which you so much admire, is no more. After witnessing the dreadful catastrophe he so feelingly describes in his poem, and after weathering many hard gales of fortune, he went to the bottom with the *Aurora* frigate. I forget what part of Scotland had the honour of giving him birth, but he was the son of obscurity and misfortune.* He was one of those daring adventurous spirits which Scotland, beyond any other country, is remarkable for producing. Little does the fond mother think, as she hangs delighted over the sweet little leech at her bosom, where the poor fellow may hereafter wander, and what may be his fate. I remember a stanza in an old Scottish ballad, which notwith-

* In addition to these remarks it will not be unnecessary to add, that William Falconer was born in Edinburgh, about the year 1730. His parents, after suffering many hardships, both died of an epidemic fever, leaving him, at an early age, forlorn and destitute. He was compelled, against his inclination, to embrace a sea-faring life; and was bound an apprentice to a trading vessel at Leith, in which he had an opportunity of seeing a number of foreign parts. Before he was eighteen, he was engaged at Alexandria, as second mate of a large merchantship in the Levant trade. About three years after, he displayed his poetical abilities in a small poem printed in Edinburgh; and in 1762, he went to London, where he published "*The Shipwreck*." The success of this piece drew him from obscurity; and being patronized by the Duke of York, he was rated as a midshipman on board the *Royal George*. In 1763, he was appointed purser to the *Glory* frigate; and in 1769, he occupied the same station in the *Aurora*. This vessel, destined to India, touched at the Cape of Good Hope on her passage out; and left it on the 21st of December in the same year; but whether the foundered or was burnt at sea, has not been ascertained. The prevalent opinion was, that she blew up. In his person, Falconer was of the middle size, slenderly made, and with a dark weather-beaten countenance, marked by the small-pox. No remains of the family are now known to exist in Edinburgh. A sister, who was supposed to be the last surviving, died about thirty-five years ago in a workhouse there.

standing its rude simplicity, speaks feelingly to the heart :—

" Little did my mother think,
That day she cradled me,
What land I was to travel in,
Or what death I should die."

Old Scottish songs are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine; and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you. The catastrophe of the piece is a poor ruined female, lamenting her fate. She concludes with this pathetic wish :

" O that my father had ne'er on me smil'd;
O that my mother had ne'er to me sang!
O that my cradle had never been rock'd:
But that I had died when I was young."

" O that the grave is were my bed;
My blankets were my winding-sheet;
The clocks and the worms my bed-fellows;
And O me sound as I should sleep!"

I do not remember in all my reading to have met with any thing more truly the language of misery, than the exclamation in the last line. Misery is like love; to speak its language truly, the author must have felt it.

I am every day expecting the doctor to give your little god-son * the small-pox. They are *rife* in the country, and I tremble for his fate. By the way, I cannot help congratulating you on his looks and spirit. Every person who sees him, acknowledges him to be the finest, handsomest child he has ever seen. I am myself delighted with the manly swell of his little chest, and a certain miniature dignity in the carriage of his head, and the glance of his fine black eye, which promise the undaunted gallantry of an independent mind.

* The Poet's second son, Francis.

I thought to have sent you some rhymes, but time forbids. I promise you poetry, until you are tired of it, next time I have the honour of assuring you how truly I am, &c.

CII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1790.

I beg your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unglightly sheet—

" My poverty but not my will consents."

But to make amends, since of modish post I have none, except one poor windowed half sheet of gilt, which lies in my drawer among my plebeian foolscap paper, like the widow of a man of fashion, whom that unpolite scoundrel, Necessity, has driven from Burgundy and Pine-apple, to a dish of Bohem, with the scandal-bearing help-mate of a village priest; or a glass of whisky-toddy, with the ruby-nosed yoke-fellow of a foot-paddling exciseman—I make a vow to enclose this sheet-full of epistolary fragments in that my only scrap of gilt-paper.

I am indeed your unworthy debtor for three friendly letters. I ought to have written to you long ere now, but it is a literal fact, I have scarcely a spare moment. It is not that I *will* not write to you; Miss Burnet is not more dear to her guardian angel, nor his grace the Duke of to the powers of than my friend Cunningham to me. It is not that I cannot write to you; should you doubt it, take the following fragment which was intended for you some time ago, and be convinced that I can *authenticize* sentiment and *circumspiculate* periods

as well as any corner of phrase in the regions of philology.

My dear Cunningham, Dec. 1788.

Where are you? And what are you doing? Can you be that son of levity, who takes up a friendship as he takes up a fashion; or are you, like some other of the worthiest fellows in the world, the victim of indolence, laden with fetters of ever-increasing weight?

What strange beings we are! Since we have a portion of conscious existence, equally capable of enjoying pleasure, happiness, and rapture, or of suffering pain, wretchedness, and misery, it is surely worthy of an inquiry, whether there be not such a thing as a science of life, whether method, economy, and fertility of expedients be not applicable to enjoyment; and whether there be not a want of dexterity in pleasure which renders our little scantling of happiness still less; and a profuseness, an intoxication in bliss, which leads to satiety, disgust, and self-abhorrence?

There is not a doubt but that health, talents, character, decent competency, respectable friends, are real substantial blessings; and yet do we not daily see those who enjoy many or all of these good things, contrive, notwithstanding, to be as unhappy as others to whose lot few of them have fallen? I believe one great source of this mistake or misconduct is owing to a certain stimulus, with us called ambition, which goads us up the hills of life, not as we ascend other eminences, for the laudable curiosity of viewing an extended landscape, but rather from the dishonest pride of looking down on others of our fellow-creatures, seemingly diminutive in humbler stations, &c. &c.

Sunday, Feb. 4, 1790.

God help me! I am now obliged to join

"Night to day, and Sunday to the week."

If there be any truth in the orthodox faith of these churches, I am damned past redemption, and, what is worse, damned to all eternity. I am deeply read in *Boston's Fourfold State*, *Marshall on Sanctification*, *Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest*, &c.; but "there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there," for me; so I shall even turn Arminian, and trust to "sincere, though imperfect obedience."

Tuesday, 16.

Luckily for me I was prevented from the discussion of the knotty point at which I had just made a full stop. All my fears and cares are of this world. If there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a deist; but I fear every fair, unprejudiced inquirer must in some degree be a sceptic. It is not that there are many very staggering arguments against the immortality of man; but, like electricity, phlogiston, &c., the subject is so involved in darkness, that we want data to go upon. One thing frightens me much—That we are to live for ever seems *too good news to be true*. That we are to enter into a new scene of existence, where, exempt from want and pain, we shall enjoy ourselves and our friends, without satiety or separation; how much should I be indebted to any one who could fully assure me that this was certain!

My time is once more expired. I write to Mr. Cleghorn soon. God bless him and all his concerns! And may all the powers that preside over conviviality and

friendship, be present with all their kindest influence, when the bearer of this, Mr. Spence, and you meet! I wish I could also make one. I think we should be

Finally, brethren, farewell! Whatever things are lovely, whatever things are gentle, whatever things are charitable, whatever things are kind, think on these things, and think on

ROBERT BURNS.

CIII.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

Edinburgh, March 2, 1790.

At a late meeting of the Monkland Friendly Society, it was resolved to augment their library by the following books, which you are to send us as soon as possible: *The Mirror*, *The Lounger*, *Man of Feeling*, *Man of the World*, (these for my own sake, I wish to have by the first carrier), *Knox's History of the Reformation*, *Rae's History of the Rebellion in 1715*, any good *History of the Rebellion in 1745*, *A Display of the Scandal Act and Testimony*, by Mr. Gibb, *Harvey's Meditations*, *Beveridge's Thoughts*, and another copy of *Watson's Body of Divinity*.

I wrote to Mr. A. Masterton three or four months ago, to pay some money he owed me into your hands, and lately, I wrote you to the same purpose, but I have heard from neither one nor other of you.

In addition to the books I commissioned in my last, I want very much, *An Index to the Scotch Laws, or an Abridgement of all the Statutes now in force relative to the Scotch*, by Jellinger Symonds. I want three copies of this book. If it is now to be had, cheap or dear, get it for me. An honest country neighbour of

mine wants, too, *A Family Bible*, the larger the better, but second-handed, for he does not choose to give above ten shillings for the book. I want likewise, for myself, as you can pick them up, second-handed or cheap, copies of *Quincy's Dramatic Works*, *Ben Jonson's*, *Dryden's*, *Congreve's*, *Wycherley's*, *Fanbrugh's*, *Cibber's*, or any *Dramatic Works* of the more modern *Macklin*, *Garrick*, *Poe*, *Colman*, or *Iberidan*. A good copy too of *Moliere*, in French, I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also: but comic authors chiefly, though I should wish to have *Racine*, *Corneille*, and *Voltaire* too. I am in no hurry for all, or any of these, but if you accidentally meet with them very cheap, get them for me.

And now, to quit the dry walk of business, how do you do, my dear friend! and how is Mrs. Hill? I trust, if now and then not so elegantly handsome, at least as amiable, and sings as divinely as ever. My good wife, too, has a charming "wood-note wild." Now, could we four

I am out of all patience with this vile world, for one thing. Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures. Except in a few scoundrelly instances, I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have is born with us; but we are placed here amid so much nakedness, and hunger, and poverty, and want, that we are under a cursed necessity of studying selfishness in order that we may *subsist*.^a Still there are, in every age, a few souls, that all the wants and woes of this life cannot debase to selfishness, or even to the necessary alloy of caution and prudence. If ever I am in danger of vanity, it is when I contemplate myself on this

^a A similar thought occurs in a letter to Mr. Ainslie, p. 271.

side of my disposition and character. God knows I am no saint. I have a whole host of follies and sins to answer for, but if I could, and I believe I do it as far as I can, I would wipe away all tears from all eyes! Adieu.

CIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, April 19, 1790.

I have just now, my ever-honoured friend, enjoyed a very high luxury in reading a paper of the *Leaenger*. You know my national prejudices. I had often read and admired the *Speciator*, *Adventurer*, *Rambler*, and *World*; but still with a certain regret that they were so thoroughly and entirely English. Alas! have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the Union, that can counter-balance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! I often repeat that couplet of my favourite poet Goldsmith,

"Sister, of native liberty proud,

Tho' very poor, may yet be very blest."

Nothing can reconcile me to the common terms, "English ambassador, English court," &c. and I am out of all patience to see that equivocal character, Hastings, impeached by the "Commons of England."

Tell me, my friend, is this weak prejudice? I believe, in my conscience, such ideas, as, "my country; her independence; her honour; the illustrious names that mark the history of my native land," &c.—I believe these, among your *men of the world*—men who in fact guide, for the most part, and govern our world—are looked on as so many modifications of wrong-headedness. They know the

use of hawling out such terms to rouse or lead *the rabble*; but for their own private use, with almost all the *able statesmen* that ever existed, or now exist, when they talk of *right* and *wrong*, they only mean *proper* and *improper*; and their measure of conduct is, not what they *ought*, but what they *dare*.

For the truth of this I shall not ransack the history of nations, but appeal to one of the ablest judges of men, and himself one of the ablest men that ever lived—the celebrated earl of Chesterfield. In fact, a man who could thoroughly controul his vices when they interfered with his interests, and who could completely put on the appearance of every virtue as often as it suited his purposes, is, on the Stanhopean plan, the *perfect man*—a man to lead nations.

But are great abilities, complete without a flaw, and polished without a blemish, the standard of human excellence? This is certainly the staunch opinion of *men of the world*; but I call on honour, virtue, and worth, to give the Stygian doctrine a loud negative. However, this must be allowed, that, if you abstract from man the idea of an existence beyond the grave, then, the true measure of human conduct is *proper* and *improper*. Virtue and vice, as dispositions of the heart, are, in that case, of scarcely the same import and value to the world at large, as harmony and discord in the modifications of sound; and a delicate sense of honour, like a nice ear for music, though it may sometimes give the possessor an ecstasy unknown to the coarser organs of the herd, yet, considering the harsh gratings, and inharmonious jars, in this ill-timed state of being, it is odds but the individual would be as happy, and certainly would be as much respected by the true judges of society, as it would then stand, without either a good ear or a good heart.

You must know I have just met with the *Mirror* and *Levenger* for the first time, and I am quite in raptures with them; I should be glad to have your opinion of some of the papers. The one I have just read, *Levenger*, No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than any thing I have read for a long time. M^rKenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His *Man of Feeling* (but I am not counsel learned in the laws of criticism), I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself, or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley?

Still, with all my admiration of M^rKenzie's writings, I do not know if they are the fittest reading for a young man who is about to set out, as the phrase is, to make his way into life. Do not you think, Madam, that among the few favoured of Heaven in the structure of their minds (for such there certainly are), there may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity, an elegance of soul, which are of no use, nay, in some degree, absolutely disqualifying for the truly important business of making a man's way into life? If I am not much mistaken, my gallant young friend, A, is very much under these disqualifications; and for the young females of a family I could mention, well may they excite parental solicitude; for I, a common acquaintance, or, as my vanity will have it, an humble friend, have often trembled for a turn of mind which may render them eminently happy—or peculiarly miserable!

I have been manufacturing some verses lately, but as I have got the most hurried season of excise-business over, I hope to have more leisure to transcribe any thing that may show how much

I have the honour to be, Madam, yours, &c.

CV.

TO DR. MOORE.

Dumfries, Excise-office, July 14, 1790.

Sir,

Coming into town this morning, to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you, as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can; but let my letter be as stupid as, as miscellaneous as a newspaper, as short as a hungry grace before meat, or as long as a law paper in the Douglas case: as ill-spelt as country John's billet-doux, or as unsightly a scrawl as Betty Byre-Mucker's answer to it—I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it; and, as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, *Zeluca*. In fact you are in some degree blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me, that nothing less would serve my overweening fancy, than a formal criticism on the book. In fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel writers. This, I own, betrays my

ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear, but I am fond of the spirit young Eliza shows in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion." I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pencil, and marking with asterisks, parentheses, &c. wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkably well turned period, or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I shall hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative View," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are.

I have just received from my gentleman, that horrid summons in the book of Revelation,—"⁴ That time shall be no more!"

The little collection of sonnets have some charming poetry in them. If indeed I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgments, and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of her pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feeling as an author, doing as I would be done by.

CVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dear Madam, August 8, 1790.

After a long day's toil, plague, and care, I sit down to write to you. Ask me not why I have delayed it so long!

It was owing to hurry, indolence, and fifty other things; in short, to anything—but forgetfulness of *la plus aimable des des*. By the by, you are indebted your best courtesy to me for this last compliment, as I pay it from my sincere conviction of its truth—a quality rather rare in compliments of these grinning, bowing, scraping times.

Well, I hope writing to you will ease a little my troubled soul. Sorely has it been bruised to-day! A *ci-devant* friend of mine, and an intimate acquaintance of yours, has given my feelings a wound that I perceive will gangrene dangerously ere it cure. He has wounded my pride!

CVII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Edinburgh, Aug. 8, 1790.

Forgive me, my once dear, and ever dear friend, my seeming negligence. You cannot sit down and fancy the busy life I lead.

I laid down my goose feather to heat my brains for an apt simile, and had some thoughts of a country grannum at a family christening; a bride on the market-day before her marriage; [a tavern-keeper at an election dinner; &c. &c.—but the resemblance that hits my fancy best, is that blackguard miscreant, Satan, who roams about like a roaring lion, seeking, *searching* whom he may devour. However, tossed about as I am, if I choose (and who would not choose) to bind down with the crampets of attention the brazen foundation of integrity, I may rear up the superstructure of independence, and, from its daring

torrets, bid defiance to the storms of fate.
And is not this a "consummation devoutly to be wished?"

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion-heart, and eagle-eye!
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky."

Are not these noble verses? They are the introduction of *Emeline's Ode to Independence*: if you have not seen the poem, I will send it to you. How wretched is the man that hangs on by the favours of the great! To shrink from every dignity of man, at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who, amid all his thine glitter and stately hasten, is but a creature, formed as thou art—and perhaps, not so well formed as thou art—came into the world a pining infant as thou didst, and must go out of it as all men must, a naked corpse!

CVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

November, 1790.

"As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Fate has long owed me a letter of good news from you, in return for the many tidings of sorrow which I have received. In this instance I most cordially obey the apostle—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice,"—for me, to *rejoice* for joy, is no new thing; but to *preach* for joy, as I have done in the commencement of this epistle, is a pitch of extravagant rapture to which I never rose before.

I read your letter—I literally jumped for joy—how could such a mercurial creature as a poet lumpishly keep his seat on the receipt of the best news from his best

friend! I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod, an instrument indispensably necessary in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker—out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith, to must over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. Mrs. Little's is a more elegant, but not a more sincere compliment, to the sweet little fellow, than I, extempore almost, poured out to him in the following verses.*

I am much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam o'Shanter*, which you express in your former letter;—though, by the bye, you had me in that said letter with accusations heavy and many; to all which I plead *not guilty*! Your book is, I hear, on the road to reach me.—As to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press, you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves.

I have a copy of *Tam o'Shanter* ready to send you by the first opportunity; it is too heavy to send by post.

I heard of Mr. Corbet lately. He, in consequence of your recommendation, is most zealous to serve me.—Please favour me soon with an account of your good folks; if Mrs. H. is recovering, and the young gentleman doing well.

CIX.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, Jan. 23, 1791.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear friend! As many of the good things of this life as is consistent

* On the Birth of a posthumous Child. See p. 117.

with the usual mixture of good and evil in the cup of being!

I have just finished a poem which you will receive enclosed. It is my first essay in the way of tales.

I have for these several months been hammering at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get no further than the following fragment, on which please give me your strictures. In all kinds of poetic composition I set great store by your opinion; but in sentimental verses, in the poetry of the heart, no Roman Catholic ever set more value on the infallibility of the Holy Father than I do on yours.

I mean the introductory couplets as text verses.*

Let me hear from you soon. Adieu!

CX.

TO MR. F. HILL.

January 17, 1791.

Take these two guineas, and place them over against that account of yours! which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules; not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an task!—Poverty! thou half sister of death, thou cousin german of hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to the amplitude of thy demerits! Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the

practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little—little aid to support his existence from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him scolded and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, lyes pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see in suffering silence his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee, the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education, is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies as usual bring him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. His early follies and extravagance are spirit and fire: his consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a and a lord. Nay, worst of all, alas, for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot-wheels of the

* See p. 119.

corrocted Rip, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.

Well! Divines may say of it what they please, but excretion is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.

CXI.

TO A. F. TYLER, ESQ.

Sir,

Nothing less than the unfortunate accident I have met with, could have prevented my grateful acknowledgments for your letter. His own favourite poem,* and that an essay in a walk of the muses entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were on the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt; to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever thrilled along the heart-string of a poor poet. However, Providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which it seems is necessary in this sublunary state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter, my horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms to thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there; one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce, it cannot easily be remedied. Your approbation, Sir, has

* *Tam o' Shanter.*

given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition, that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me an additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honour to be, &c.

CXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburg, Feb. 7, 1791.

When I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing, you will allow that it is too good an apology for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember if ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet of Montbodo. I had the honour of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance, as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's works was no more. I have as yet gone no farther than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted, that any new idea on the business is not to be expected; 'tis well if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last, you will judge from what follows. *

* This Elegy will be found, in its finished state, p. 118.

Your kind letter, with your kind remembrance of your godson, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partially apart, the finest boy I have of a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the small-pox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and yet never had a grain of doctor's drugs in his howels.

I am truly happy to hear that the "little floweret" is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the "mother plant" is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her "cruel wounds" be healed! I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler, you shall hear farther from,

Madam, yours, &c.

CXIII.

TO LADY W. M. CONSTABLE.

Acknowledging a present of a snuff-box, with a Picture of Mary, Queen of Scots, on the lid.

My Lady,

Nothing less than the unlucky accident of having lately broken my right arm, could have prevented me, the moment I received your Ladyship's elegant present by Mrs. Miller, from returning you my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. I assure your Ladyship I shall set it apart; the symbols of religion shall only be more sacred. In the moment of poetic composition, the box shall be my inspiring genius. When I would breathe the comprehensive wish of benevolence for the happiness of others, I shall recollect your Ladyship; when I would interest my fancy in the distresses incident to humanity, I shall remember the unfortunate Mary.

CXIV.

TO THE REV. G. BAIRD.

Why did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style, on the business of poor Bruce? Do not I know, and have I not felt the many ills, the peculiar ills, that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and had your letter had my direction so as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment) I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription-bills, may bear, that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it in the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clutched a share in the work for mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of peccadilloes, failings, follies, and backslidings (any body but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little the vista of retrospection.

CXV.

TO MRS. GRAHAM,
OF FINTRY.

Madam,

Whether it is that the story of our Mary, Queen of Scots, has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad* succeeded

* See p. 180.

beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply indebted to Mr. G——'s goodness; and what, in the usual ways of men, is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor; but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and, without any fustian affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm, that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter shall ever make me do any thing injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart and an independent mind! It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr. G——'s chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine to receive with thankfulness, and remember with undiminished gratitude.

CIVI.

TO DR. NOBLE.

Edinburgh, Feb. 28, 1794.

I do not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to *Grose's Antiquities of Scotland*. If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the

principal end I have in view; it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of shewing you, that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize, are still employed in the way you wish.

The *Elegy on Captain Henderson* is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that boorn where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical: but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living; and, as a very orthodox text, I forget where in Scripture, says, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with *Percy's Reliques of English Poetry*. By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of Buchanan and Targe! 'Twas an unequal vocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving Targe the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not.

I have just read over, once more of many times, your *Zelace*. I marked with

my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one or two I think, which, with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart, is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I ever perused. Richardson indeed might perhaps be excepted; but, unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of some other world; and however they may captivate the inexperienced romantic fancy of a boy or girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper minds.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of Excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence: so soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day) my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much of the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the

many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors, this is one of the best, *Better be the head of the commonalty as the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject, which, however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely

I have the honour to be yours, &c.

Written on the black leaf of a book which I presented to a very young lady, whom I had formerly characterized under the denomination of *The Reckard*.^a

CXVII.

TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

Sir, Ellisland, Feb. 14, 1791.

You must, by this time, set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honour to present me with a book which does honour to science and the intellectual powers of man, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up, forsooth, a deep-learned digest of strictures, on a composition, of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that, at first glance, several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangor of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle-

^a See p. 154.

twangle of a Jew's harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a barlock; and that from something innate and independent of all association of ideas; these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith.—In short, Sir, except *Euclid's Elements of Geometry*, which I made a shift to unravel by my father's fire-side, in the winter evenings of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas as your "*Essays on the Principles of Taste*." One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work, I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style, sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.

I am, Sir, &c.

CXVIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

March 12, 1791.

If the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have just composed always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe, in general, novelty has something in it that incrinates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the

poor patient, as usual, with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced in the revolution of many a hymeneal honey-moon. But lest I sink into stupid prose, and so sacrilegiously intrude on the office of my parish priest, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition, which will appear, perhaps, in Johnson's work, as well as the former.

You must know a beautiful Jacobite air, *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*. When political combustion ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets.*

If you like the air, and if the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to "the memory of joys that are past!" to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on till I hear the clock has intimated the near approach of

"That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stone."

So good night to you! Sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams!—Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad I have just now on the tapis?†

Good night, once more, and God bless you!

CXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLAP.

Edinburgh, April 14, 1791.

I am once more able, my honoured friend, to return you with my own hand,

* See p. 187.

† The last stanza of "Out over the Forth." See p. 214.

thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy, rather stouter, but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little namesake to be my *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on Tam o' Shanter to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery that might, perhaps, be as well spared;—but then they also shew, in my opinion, a force of genius, and a finishing polish, that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast, as a reaper from the corn ridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale aprightly damsels, that are bred among the *hay and heather*. We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cortex of Venus. It is, indeed, such an inestimable treasure, that where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to Heaven, I should think it cheaply purchased at the expence of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such a humble one as mine;—we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence—as fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty, and unsullied purity; nature's mother-wit, and the rudiments of taste; a sim-

licity of soul, unsuspecting of, because unacquainted with the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world; and the dearest charm of all the rest, a yielding sweetness of disposition, and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part, and ardently glowing with more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, and a sound, vigorous constitution, which your higher ranks can scarcely ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made. Do let me hear, by first post, how *cher petit Monsieur* comes on with his small pox. May Almighty goodness preserve and restore him!

CXX.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

June 11, 1791.

Let me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman who waits on you with this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal school-master there, and is at present suffering severely under the of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to . . . that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of sensibility and genius, and such is my friend Clarke, when a booby father presents him with his booby son, and insists on lighting up the rays of science in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and inaccessible by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel: a fellow whom, in fact, it savours of implety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a blockhead in the book of fate, at the Almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat-school are the

ministers, magistrates, and town-council of Edinburgh; and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do every thing in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius and worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistracy and council,..... but particularly you have much to say with a reverend gentleman, to whom you have the honour of being very nearly related, and whom this country and age have had the honour to produce.—I need not name the historian of Charles V.* I tell him, through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronage. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance and.....

my follies. The first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude, must be incident to human nature, do thou, Fortune, put it in my power, always from myself, and of myself, to bear the consequences of those errors. I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend, Mr. Clarke, to your acquaintance and good offices. His worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other. I long much to hear from you. Adieu.

CXXI.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

My Lord,

Language sinks under the ardour of my feelings, when I would thank your lordship for the honour you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson. In my first enthusiasm in reading the card you did me the honour to write to me, I overlooked every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two's absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what, I much doubt, I dare not venture on.

Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion; but who could write after Collins! I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired. I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am

God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often, alas! almost unexceptionably, received by their friends with disrespect and reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. Oh! to be the sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence, amid the solitary wilds of his deserts, rather than in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature!

Every man has his virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curse on that privileged plain-dealing of friendship, which, in the hour of my calamity, cannot reach forth the helping hand without at the same time pointing out those failings, and apportioning them their share in procuring my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls you, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by virtues if you please, but do, also, spare

* Dr. Robertson was uncle to Mr. Cunningham.

afraid, will be but too convicting a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully

I have the honour to be, &c.

CXXII.

TO LADY E. CUNNINGHAM.

My Lady,

I would, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you any thing I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the inclosed had been much more worthy your perusal. As it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late earl of Glencairn, I would wish to shew as openly that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory, were not the "mock-cry of woe." Nor shall my gratitude perish with me. If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world.*

* Lament for James Earl of Glencairn. See p. 176.

CXXIII.

TO MR. AINSLIE.

My dear Ainslie,

Can you minister to a mind diseased? Can you, amid the horrors of penitence, regret, remorse, head-ache, nausea, and all the rest of the damned bounds of hell, that beset a poor wretch who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Miserable perdu that I am, I have tried every thing that used to amuse me, but in vain. Here must I sit a monument of the vengeance laid up in store for the wicked—slowly counting every click of the clock as it slowly—slowly numbers over these lazy scoundrels of hours, who, damn them, are ranked up before me, every one at his neighbour's backside, and every one with a burthen of anguish on his back, to pour on my devoted head—and there is none to pity me! My wife scolds me, my business torments me, and my sins come staring me in the face, every one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow.

When I tell you even . . . has lost its power to please, you will guess something of my hell within, and all around me. I began *Elphinstone* and *Elphinstone*, but the stanzas fell unenjoyed and unfinished from my listless tongue. At last, I luckily thought of reading over an old letter of yours that lay by me in my book-case; and I felt something for the first time, since I opened my eyes, of pleasurable existence.

Well! I begin to breathe a little since I began to write to you. How are you, and what are you doing? How goes law? Apropos, for connexion's sake do not address to me supervisor, for that is an honour I cannot pretend to. I am on the

list, as we call it, for a supervisor, and will be called out by and bye to act as one; but at present I am a simple gauger, though the other day I got an appointment to an excise division of twenty-five pounds *per ann.* better than the rest. My present income, money down, is seventy pounds *per ann.*

I have one or two good fellows here whom you would be glad to know.

CXIV.

TO MISS DAVIES.

It is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful mind can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners; I mean a torpidity of the moral powers that may be called a lethargy of conscience. In vain remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes. Beneath the deadly fixed eye and leaden hand of indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat slumbering out the rigours of winter in the chink of a ruined wall.

Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed I had one apology—the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad is downright mockery of these ardent feelings. It is like an impatient jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers;

Why is the most generous wish, to make others blest, impotent and ineffectual as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert? In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said—Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tremble under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others, which, I am certain, will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow!

Why, dear Madam, must I awake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of adding one comfort to the friend I love? Out upon the world, say I, that its affairs are administered so ill!

They talk of reform. Good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons, and even the daughters of men! Down, immediately, should go fools from the high places where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they skulk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow. As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them. Had I a world, there should not be a knave in it.

But the hand that could give I would liberally fill; and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive, and generously love.

Still the inequalities of this life are, among men, comparatively tolerable; but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life. Let there be slight degrees of precedence among them; but let them be all sacred. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable. It is an original component feature of my mind.

CXLV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, December 17, 1791.

Many thanks to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little "Bow'net" and the "mother plant." I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest elasticity of their fullest extent! and then Mrs. Henry will find her little darling the representative of his late parent in every thing but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song, which, to a lady, the descendant of Wallace, and many heroes of his truly illustrious line, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology.*

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was looking over, with a musical friend, M^r Donald's Collection of Highland Airs. I was struck with one, an Air of Sky tune, entitled *Oran an Jaig*, or, *The Song of Death*, to the measure of which I have adapted my stanza. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which, ere you full-

The Song of Death. See p. 316.

orbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at old mother earth all night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. *Adieu je vous commende!*

CXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

January 3, 1792.

You see my hurried life, Madam. I can only command starts of time. However, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham; for the Board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you, that all is set to rights in that quarter.

Now, as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to; but hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall a swearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness—in all the charities and all the virtues—between one class of human beings and another! For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of B——, their generous hearts—their uncontaminated, dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him; and, with a grin of

satisfaction, see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whigmaleerie cup, and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of Sir William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm that they insisted on bumping the punch round in it; and, by the bye, never did your great ancestor lay a *Sambucus* more completely to rest, than, for a time, did your cup my two friends.

Apropos, this is the season of wishing. May God bless you, my dear friend, and bless me, the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours wherever they are scattered over the earth!

CXXVII.

TO MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE,

PRINTER, EDINBURGH.

Dumfries, Jan. 29, 1792.

I sit down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies, than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of Fashion, as an idiotic painter that seems industrious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the fore-ground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades.

Mrs. Riddell, who will take this letter to town with her and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady, too, is a votary of the muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct, and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the *lady poets* of the day. She is a great admirer of your book; and hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital.

I told her that her best way was to desire her relation, and your intimate friend, Craigdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl of eighteen, as girls of eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady's merits, she has one unlucky failing—a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it—and a failing that you will as easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself. Where she dislikes or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning *compliments of the season*; but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers, that Fortune may never throw your subsistence to the mercy of a knave, nor set your character on the judgment of a fool; but that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say, Here lies a man who did honour to science; and men of worth shall say, Here lies a man who did honour to human nature!

CXXVIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

March 3, 1793.

Since I wrote to you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you farther. When I say that I had not time, that, as usual, means, that the three demons, *indolence*, *business*, and *ennui*, have so completely shared my hours among them as not to leave me a five minutes fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank Heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I dare say he thinks I have used him unkindly; and, I must own, with too much appearance of truth.

Apropos, do you know the much admired old Highland air called *The Sister's Deckle*? It is a first-rate favourite of mine; and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it.* I will send it to you, as it was sung with great applause, in some fashionable circles, by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps.

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much. I have got one of your Highland petbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearing on it. Will you be so obliging as to inquire what will be the expence of such a business?

I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the herald calls it, at all: but I have invented arms for myself, so you

know I shall be chief of the name, and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltirewise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes; round the top of the crest, *Wood-notes wild*; at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, *Better a wee bush than nae bield*. By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia; but a *Stock and Horn*, and a *Glad*, both as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay in Allan's quarto edition of the *Gentle Shepherd*.

By the bye, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius. Why is he not more known? Has he no patrons? or do "Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was, I mean dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it, but I was told that it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the only artist who has hit *genuine* pastoral costume.

What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and harden the heart so? I think that were I as rich as the sun I should be as generous as the day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-lime quality to the possessor, at which the man, in his native poverty, would have revolted.

What has led me to this, is the idea of such merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob or government-

* See Letters to G. Thomson, No. XXXI.

contractor possesses, and why they do not form a mutual league. Let wealth shelter and cherish unprotected merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay it.

CXXX.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ.

Sir,

1799.

Among the many witch stories I have heard relating to Alloway kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail; in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough iron on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious look out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach, plainly shewed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay into the very kirk. As good luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junta were all out on some midnight business

or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c. for the business of the night.—It was, in for a penny in for a pound, with the honest ploughman; so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:

On a market day, in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards further on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet as it is a well-known fact, that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say; but the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was consid-

derably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled, that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel happen, Maggy wi' the short sark!" and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that so diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tail-less condition of the vigorous steed was to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene; but as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening, about the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway Kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the plant ragwort. He observed that as each person pulled a ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, "up horse!" on which the

ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his ragwort, and cried with the rest, "up horse!" and strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopped, was a merchant's wine-cellar in Bourdeaux, where, without saying by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, fore to the inns and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said he was such-a-one's herd in Alloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.

I am, &c. &c.

CXXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Annan Water Foot, Aug. 23, 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam. My own conscience, hackneyed and weather-beaten as it is, in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c. has continued to blame and punish me sufficiently.

Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours—to esteem for much worth—and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of, now, old acquaintance, and I hope and am sure of progressive increasing friendship—as, for a single day, not to think of you—to ask the Fates, what they are doing and about to do with

my much-loved friend and her wide scattered connections, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can!

Apropos (though how it is apropos, I have not leisure to explain), do you know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I—I am in love, some! overhead and ears, deep as the most unfathomable abysses of the boundless ocean. But the word love, owing to the *intermingledness* of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment.

Know then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant, humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting, and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss L.—E.—, your neighbour at M.—. Mr. E., with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries, a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. It was about nine, I think, when I left them; and riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another great of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with

"My bonnie Lizzie Bailie,

I'll row thee in my plaidie," &c.

So I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unannotated, unsealed," as Hamlet says:

"O saw ye bonnie Lizzie?" &c.*

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet has ever had this curse, that two or three people who would be the happier the oftener they meet together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet but once or twice a-year, which, considering the few years in a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man.

I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that "we meet to part no more."

"Tell us, ye dead!
Will none of you, in pity, disclose the secret,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?"

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men; but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question.

"O that some courteous ghoul would blab it
out!"

But it cannot be. You and I, my friend, must make the experiment by ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary, by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I shall take every care that your

* See Letters to George Thomson, No. 111.

little god-son, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labour of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.

CXXXI.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Dumfries, Sept. 10, 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology. Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the excise; making ballads, and then drinking and singing them; and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications; still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow creatures. I might have done, as I do at present, snatched an hour near "witching time of night," and scrawled a page or two. I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian archers for the honour they have done me; though, to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme, else I had done both long ere now.

Well, then, here is to your good health! for you must know, I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me, just by way of spell, to keep away the meikle horned dell, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

But what shall I write to you? "The voice said, Cry; and I said, What shall I cry?"—O, thou spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible! be thou a bogie by the eerie side of

an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd callan maun bicker in his gloamin route frae the fauld! Be thou a browneie, set at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn, where the repercussions of thy iron flail half affright thyself as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cock crowing summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose!—Be thou a kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yell with the howling of the storm and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat!—Or, lastly, be thou a ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of the time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent, ghastly dwelling of the dead around thee; or taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain, or the murderer, portraying on his dreaming fancy, pictures, dreadful as the horrors of unveiled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come thou spirit! but not in these horrid forms; come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations which thou breathest round the wig of a prating advocate, or the *lets* of a tea-sipping gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of clishmasclaver for ever and ever—come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half an hundred words; to fill up four quarto pages; while he has not got one single sentence of recollection, information, or remark, worth putting pen to paper for.

I feel the presence of supernatural assistance! Circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labours, like the bloated Sibyl on her three-footed stool, and, like her too, labours with nonsense. Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend,

and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law; the cadaverous paths of physic; and particularly in the sightless soarings of school divinity; who, leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pision, Reason delirious with cycling his giddy flight, and Truth creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision, raves abroad on all the winds—"On earth Discord!—a gloomy Heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteen-thousandth part of the tithes of mankind!—and below, an insupportable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!"

O doctrine! comfortable and healing to the weary, wounded soul of man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction—ye *paupers miserables*, to whom day brings no pleasure, and night yields no rest, be comforted! "It is but *one* to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world;" so, alas! the experience of the poor and the needy too often affirms—and it is nineteen hundred thousand to *one*, by the dogmas of....., that you will be damned eternally in the world to come!

But of all Nonsense, religious Nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the bye, will you, or can you tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart? They are orderly, they may be just, nay, I have known them merciful; but still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril-snuffing putrescence, and a foot-spurning filth; in short, with a conceited dignity that your titled....., or any other of your Scottish lordlings of seven centuries standing, dis-

play when they accidentally mix among the many-aproned sons of mechanical life.

I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave. How ignorant are plough-boys! Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a whore! But hold—here's t'ye again—this ram is generous Antigua, so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like, I mean *really* like, the married life? Ah! my friend, matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be. But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of his institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you my ideas of the conjugal state. *En passant*, you know I am no Latinist. Is not conjugal derived from *jugum*, a yoke? Well, then, the scale of good wifehip I divide into ten parts. Good nature, four; good sense, two; wit, one; personal charms, viz. a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage, (I would add a fine waist too, but that is soon spoilt, you know), all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on a wife, such as fortune, connexions, education (I mean education extraordinary), family blood, &c. divide the two remaining degrees among them as you please; only, remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them, in the aforesaid scale, entitled to the dignity of an *integer*.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss L——B——, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her and her father's family fifteen miles

on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God, in such an unequalled display of them—how, in galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which these two stanzas make a part—*

Behold all these things are written in the chronicles of my imagination, and shall be read by thee, my dear friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear friend, at a more convenient season.

Now to thee, and to thy before-designed bosom-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignant influences of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life, for ever and ever! Amen!

CXXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dumfries, Sept. 24, 1792.

I have this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the twenty-third. All your other kind reproaches, your news, &c. are out of my head, when I read and think on Mrs. H——'s situation. Good God! a heart-wounded, helpless young woman—in a strange foreign land, and that land convulsed with every horror that can harrow the human feelings,—sick—looking, longing for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too—but it is too much: He who wounded (He only can) may He heal!†

* The first and second. See Letters to George Thomson, No. III.

† This much lamented lady was gone to the south of France with her infant son, where she died soon after.

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family. ————— I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer, paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *curst* life! As to a laird farming his own property; sowing his own corn in hope; and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness! knowing that none can say unto him, 'what dost thou?'—fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! But devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat!

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me, when I make my Ayrshire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. B— until her nine months' race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She, too, seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as to let me have them in the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased.

I hope, if I am spared with them, to shew a set of boys that will do honour to my cares and name! but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor; a girl should always have a fortune. Apropos! your little godson is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed, the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we get into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart; you can excuse it. God bless you and yours!

CXXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Supposed to have been written on the death of Mrs. Henry, her daughter.

I had been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day. What shall I say to comfort you, my much-valued, much-afflicted friend! I can but grieve with you! consolation I have none to offer, except that which religion holds out to the children of affliction—*Children of Affliction!*—how just the expression! and like every other family, they have matters among them, which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, makes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years! What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery; like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one, from the face of night, and leaves us without a ray of comfort in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again.

CXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Dumfries, Dec. 6, 1792.

I shall be in Ayrshire, I think, next week; and, if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much esteemed friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop-House.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we

meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on accession of happiness! I have not passed half the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper, that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I and other acquaintances, little thought to meet with there so soon.

Every other instance of the mortality of our kind makes us cast an anxious look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehensions for our own fate. But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals! Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life more than another! A few years ago I could have lain down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now, not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield."

By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition; Mrs. B. having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charming passage in Thomson's *Edward and Eleanor*—

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his single worst?"

As I have got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly, alas! too peculiarly apposite, my dear Madam, to your present frame of mind—

"Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With his fair-weather virtue, that exults
Glad o'er the summer main? the tempest
comes,
The rough winds rage aloud: when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lambling—Heavens! if privileged from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson's dramas. I pick up favourite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence. Of those is one, a very favourite one, from his *Alfred*,

"Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, all
loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed, when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another: but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is religion. Speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says,

"'Tis *virtue*, my friend, that streaks our
morning bright,
'Tis *virtue* that glids the horror of our night.
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends
are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes
perjure;
'Tis *virtue* that wards the blow, or stills the
smart;
Disarms affliction, or repels his dart;
Within the breast bids parent raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloud-
less skies."

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e'en scribble out the other sheet. We, in this country here, have many alarms of the reforming, or rather the republican spirit of your part of the kingdom. Indeed we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a *place-man*, you know; a very humble one

indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much so as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter.

I have taken up the subject in another view; and, the other day, for a pretty actress's benefit-night, I wrote an Address, which I will give you on the other page, called *The Rights of Woman*.*

I shall have the honour of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop.

CXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dear Madam, Dec. 31, 1792.

A hurry of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgments to the good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed. Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! On my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

Jan. 2, 1793.

I have just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint. You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in

* See p. 109.

my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned; it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief; but even this, I have more than half given over.*

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled

* The following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Bloomfield to the Earl of Buchan, is well entitled to preservation. No species of magnanimity is more rare among minor poets, than a candid acknowledgment of their own inferiority. The parallel which the writer draws between his own situation and the character and genius of Burns, is expressed with great force and beauty.

"The illustrious soul," says he, "that has left amongst us the name of Burns, has often been lowered down to a comparison with me; but the comparison exists more in circumstance than in essentials. That man stood up with the stamp of superior intellect on his brow—a visible greatness; and great and patriotic subjects would only have called into action the powers of his mind, which lay inactive while he played calmly and exquisitely the pastoral pipe.

"The letters to which I have alluded in my preface to the 'Rural Tales,' were friendly warnings, pointed with immediate reference to the fate of that extraordinary man. 'Remember Burns,' has been the watch-word of my friends. I do remember Burns; but I AM NOT Burns! neither have I his fire to fan or to quench; nor his passions to control! Where then is my merit, if I make a peaceful voyage on a smooth sea, and with no mutiny on board? To a lady, (I have it from herself) who remonstrated with him on his danger from drink, and the perils of some of his associates, he replied, 'Madam, they would not thank me for my company, if I did not drink with them:—I would give them a slice of my constitution.' How much to be regretted that he did not give them thinner slices of his constitution, that it might have lasted longer!"

as a supervisor, for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine. I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil, has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you, I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in every thing else, I shall shew the undiguised emotions of my soul. War I deprecate; misery and ruin to thousands, are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But*

CXXIV.

TO MISS E * * * * *

OF YORK.

Madam,

March 21, 1793.

Among many things for which I envy those hale, long-lived old fellows before the flood, is this in particular, that when they met with any body after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life. Now, in this short, stormy winter-day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the chapter of accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you that you should never meet with that valued character more.

* The remainder of this letter has unfortunately been torn away. The sentiments which it contained were not in unison, perhaps, with those of his correspondent; and she might have recourse to this method for their suppression.

On the other hand, brief as the present miserable state of being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill run of the chances shall be so against you, that in the overtakings, turnings, and jostlings of life, pop! at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's repose.

As I am a sturdy believer in the powers of darkness, I take these to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the Devil. It is well known that he has some kind of short-hand way of taking down our thoughts; and I make no doubt he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss H,—how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth—and how very fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss H — tells me that she is sending a packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed sonnet, though, to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem

I have the honour to be, &c.

CXXXVII.

TO JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, ESQ.

OF MAR.*

Dumfries, April 13, 1793.

Sir,

Degenerate as human nature is said to be; and in many instances, worthless and

unprincipled it is; still there are bright examples to the contrary—examples that even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, sir, came forward to patronise and befriend a distant obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, sir, of the silent throbb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismissal from the Exche. I am still in the service indeed; but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you—Mr. Graham of Fintry—a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend—I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismissal; but the little money I gained by my publication, is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said—that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as

mark on public measures, maliciously misrepresented to the Board of Exche, he was said to have been dismissed from his situation. This report induced Mr. Erskine to propose a subscription in his favour, which was refused by the Poet with that elevation of sentiment that peculiarly characterised his mind, and which is so happily displayed in this letter.

* It may be necessary to state, that in consequence of the Poet's freedom of ex-

to Britals, I abjured the idea—that a Constitution, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory—that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of Reform. But that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious Constitution; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.

Some such sentiments as these, I stated in a letter to my generous patron Mr. Graham, which he laid before the board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, *not* to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be silent and obedient."

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward, are blasted.

Now, sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my countrymen has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the Poet I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the Man. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and, situated as I was, the only eligible

line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hireling paragraphs—"Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfare* made of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view, and to public estimation, as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity; but—I will say it! the sterling of his honest worth, no poverty could abate, and his independent British mind, oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my country's welfare, than the richest dukedom is it?—I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of slaves. Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys—the little independent Britons, in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my feeble efforts can be of no service; and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concerns of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals as I, that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support, and the eye of intelligence. The uninformed mob may swell a nation's bulk, and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng, may be its feathered ornament: but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect, yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court—these are a nation's strength.

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther.—When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. Burns, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here, in his native colours, drawn as *he is*; but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats, get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor Bard for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy, as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude, with which

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your deeply indebted,
And ever devoted humble servant.

CXXXVIII.

TO MISS C * * * *.

Madam, August, 1793.

Some rather unlooked-for accidents have prevented my doing myself the honour of a second visit to Ardsigland, as I was so hospitably invited, and so positively meant to have done. However, I still hope to have that pleasure before the busy months of harvest begin.

I enclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind of return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain MS. volume of poems in the possession of Captain Kildell. To repay one with an *old song* is a proverb, the force of which, you, Madam, I know will not allow. What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry. No one ever despised it who had pretensions to it.

The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe 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 fantastical 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.

To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman. She has in all ages been accused

of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin. Yet where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisaical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures that we owe to the lovely queen of the heart of man!

CXXXIX.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.

Sir,

December, 1793.

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 it 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 damned, dirty, dog's-eat'd little pages,* 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 ever I could make head against; but to owe you money too was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scottish songs I have for some years been making. I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I cannot conveniently spare them above five or six days; and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice

* Scottish Bank Notes.

you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.

CXL.

TO A LADY,

In favour of a Player's Benefit.

Madam,

You were so very good as to promise me to honour my friend with your presence on his benefit-night. That night is fixed for Friday first—the play a most interesting one—*The Way to keep Him*.

I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which would do honour to patronage. He is a poor and modest man; claims which, from their very silence, have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas! for pity, that from the indulgence of those who have the good things of this life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon—the rightful due of retiring, humble want!

Of all the qualities we assign to the Author and Director of nature, by far the most enviable is—to be able “to wipe away all tears from all eyes.” Oh! what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent *mausoleums*, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam. I came to beg, not to preach.

CXL.

TO MRS. R * * * * ,

Who was to break a Play one Evening at
the Dumfries Theatre.

I am thinking to send my *Address* to
some periodical publication, but it has not
got your sanction, so pray look over it.

As to the Tuesday's play, let me beg
of you, my dear Madam, to give us, *The
Wonder a Woman keeps a Secret*; to
which please add, *The Spelt Child*. You
will highly oblige me by so doing.

Ah, what an enviable creature you are!
There now, this cursed gloomy blue-
devil day, you are going to a party of
choice spirits—

....." To play the shapes
Of frolic fancy, and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before.
Where lively wit excites to gay surprise;
Or folly-painting women, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep shaking every
nerve."

But as you rejoice with them that do
rejoice, do also remember to weep with
them that weep, and pity your melan-
choly friend.

CXLII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN,

With a Copy of "Brace's Address to his
Troops at Bannockburn."

Dumfries, Jan. 19, 1794.

My Lord,

Will your lordship allow me to present
you with the enclosed little composition
of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude

for that acquaintance with which you
have been pleased to honour me. Inde-
pendent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman,
I have rarely met with any thing in his-
tory which interests my feelings as a
man, equal with the story of Bannock-
burn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able
usurper, leading on the finest army in
Europe to extinguish the last spark of
freedom among a greatly daring, and
greatly injured people; on the other
hand, the desperate relics of a gallant na-
tion devoting themselves to rescue their
bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and
indeed invaluable!—for never canst thou
be too dearly bought!

I have the honour to be, &c.

CXLIII.

TO MRS. * * * * .

Dear Madam,

I meant to have called on you yester-
night; but as I edged up to your box-
door, the first object which greeted my
view was one of those lobster-coated
puppies sitting, like another dragon,
guarding the Hesperian fruit.

On the conditions and capitulations
you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly
make my weather-beaten rustic phiz a
part of your box-furniture on Tuesday,
when we may arrange the business of the
visit.

Among the profusion of idle compli-
ments which insidious craft, or unmean-
ing folly incessantly offer at your shrine
—a shrine, how far exalted above such
adoration!—permit me, were it but for
rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tri-
bute of a warm heart, and an independent

mind! and to assure you that I am, thou most amiable and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c.

CXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

I will wait on you, my ever-valued friend; but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our cursed revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen!

There is a species of the human genus that I call *the gin-house class*. What enviable dogs they are! Round and round they go! Mundell's ox, that drives his cotton-mill, is their exact prototype—without an idea or a wish beyond their circle—fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented—while here I sit altogether Novemberish, a damned *melange* of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor—my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tumbrel, like a wild finch caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage.

Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—"And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!"

If my resentment is awakened it is sure to be where it dare not speak; and if

Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visitors of

E. B.

CXLV.

TO THE SAME.

I have this moment got the song from S. . . , and I am sorry to see that he has spoiled it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lead him any thing again.

I have sent you *Walter*, truly happy to have any, the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

It is true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at W——; and that once froze the life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch, meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her.

CXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

I have often told you, my dear friend, that you had a spice of caprice in your composition, and you have as often disavowed it, even perhaps while your opinions were at the moment irrefragably proving it. Could *anything* estrange me from a friend such as you? No! To-morrow I shall have the honour of waiting on you.

Farewell, thou first of friends, and most accomplished of women—even with all thy little caprices!

CXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Madam,

I return your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms; but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you, as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, now to find cold neglect and contemptuous scorn—is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable good luck, that while *de-haut-en-bas* rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities, the most sincere esteem and ardent regard for your gentle heart and amiable manners, and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss,

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your most devoted, humble servant.

CXLVIII.

TO JOHN SYME, ESQ.

You know, that among other high dignities, you have the honour to be my

supreme court of critical judicature from which there is no appeal. I enclose you a song* which I composed since I saw you; and I am going to give you the history of it. Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honour to call my acquaintances, the O family, there is nothing charms me more than Mr. O 's unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman.

Did you ever, my dear Syme, meet with a man who owed more to the Giver of all good things than Mr. O ? A fine fortune; a pleasing exterior; self-evident amiable dispositions; and an ingenuous upright mind, and that informed too, much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank and fortune; and to all this—such a woman!—But of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying any thing adequate.

In my song I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I, in my first fervour, thought of sending it to Mrs. O ; but on second thoughts, perhaps what I offer as the honest incense of genuine respect, might, from the well known character of poverty and poetry, be construed into some modification or other of that servility which my soul abhors.

CXLIX.

TO MISS ———.

Madam,

Nothing short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble

* "O, wae ye wha's in yon town." See p. 124.

you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste, and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have passed with the friend of my soul and his amiable connexions! The wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world! and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth ere it took its flight!

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish. However you, also, may be offended with some imputed improprieties of mine, sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me, is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?

I have a favour to request of you, Madam, and of your sister Mrs. —, through your means. You know that, at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written. They are, many of them, local, some of them puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake—a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who “watch for my halting,” and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion—I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts.

Will Mrs. — have the goodness to destroy them, or return them to me! As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance, indeed, was all their merit. Most unhappily for me that merit they no longer possess; and I hope that Mrs. —'s goodness, which I well know, and ever will revere, will not refuse this favour to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.

With the sincerest esteem, I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.

CL.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Feb. 25, 1794.

Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?
Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul
tossed on a sea of troubles, without one
friendly star to guide her course, and
dreading that the next surge may over-
whelm her? Canst thou give to a frame,
tremblingly alive to the tortures of sus-
pense, the stability and hardihood of the
rock that braves the blast? If thou canst
not do the least of these, why wouldst
thou disturb me in my miseries with thy
inquiries after me?

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times; losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings, at times, could only be eased by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

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 reasonings; 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 amid 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 them, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *reverses 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 beneficent 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 laugh 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. 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 appeared to me and to others such superlative sources of enjoyment.

It is in this point of view, and for this

reason, that I will deeply imbue 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 possess an imagination delighted with the painter and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him wandering out, in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of 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, delighting degrees, is rapt 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,
thine
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 pleasures. They are real delights; and I ask what 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.

CLL.

TO DR. ANDERSON.

Sir,

I am much indebted to my worthy friend Dr. Blacklock for introducing me to a gentleman of Dr. Anderson's celebrity; but when you do me the honour

to ask my assistance in your purposed publication, alas, Sir! you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an Advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the nose of the poor publicans to the grindstone of Excise; and like Milton's Satan, for private reasons am forced

"To do what yet though dam'd I would
abhor;"—

and except a couplet or two of honest execration,

CLII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Castle Douglas, June 25, 1794.

Here in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may. Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favourite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been so exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health, will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I paced along the road. The subject is *Liberty*: You know, my honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it an irregular Ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy

of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:

There, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
There, fam'd for martial deed and sacred
song,

To thee I turn with swimming eyes:

Where is that soul of Freedom fled?

Immingled with the mighty dead!

Beneath that hallowed turf where Wallace
lies!

Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!

Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;

Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,

Nor give the coward secret breath.

In this the power in freedom's war

That went to bid the haule rage?

Behold that eye which shon immortal hail,

Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,

That arm which, nerv'd with thundering
fate,

Bru'd usurpation's boldness daring!

One quench'd in darkness like the sinking
star,

And one the palmed arm of tottering,
powerless age.

You will probably have another scrawl
from me in a stage or two.

CLIII.

TO PETER MILLER, JUN. ESQ.*

OF DALSWINTON.

Dumfries, Nov. 1794.

Dear Sir,

Your offer is indeed truly generous,
and most sincerely do I thank you for it;

* Mr. Miller, in a conversation with Mr. Perry, the proprietor of "The Morning Chronicle," represented to that gentleman the insufficiency of Burns's income to meet the demands of a numerous family. In their sympathy for his misfortunes, and regret that his talents were nearly lost to the world of letters, these gentlemen agreed on the plan of sending him in London.

To accomplish this object, Mr. Perry made the Poet an offer of a handsome annual sal.

but in my present situation, I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time they are most welcome to my Ode; only let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me. Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honour, after your character of him, I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which any thing will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to those Mr. Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his paper, which, by the bye, to any body who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed.

With the most grateful esteem, I am ever,

Dear Sir, &c.

pend for the exercise of his talents in his newspaper. Burns's reasons for refusing this offer are stated in the present letter.

CLIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

My dear Friend, Dec. 13, 1795.

As I am in a complete Decemberish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the deity of Dulness herself could wish, I shall not draw out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it: these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill, that every day, a week or less, threatened to terminate her existence.

There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the state of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours, these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay: and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of Fate, even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock!

'Tis here that I cavy your people of fortune! A father on his death bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has wo enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject.

To leave talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad—

"O that I had ne'er been married,
I would never had nan care;
Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
They cry, Crowdie! evermair.

"Crowdie! once; crowdie twice;
Crowdie! three times in a day!
As ye crowdie! ooy mair,
Ye'll crowdie! all my meal awy."

December 24.

We have had a brilliant theatre here this season; only, as all other business has, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, *went of carb*. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an occasional *Address*, which I wrote for the benefit night of one of the actresses.*

Christmas Morning.

This, my much loved friend, is a morning of wishes; accept mine—so heaven hear me as they are sincere! that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favourite author, *The Man of Feeling*, "May the great Spirit bear up the weight of thy grey hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cowper? Is not the *Task* a glorious poem? The religion of the *Task*, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature; the religion that exalts, and ennobles man. Were not you to send me your *Zetters*, in return for mine! Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which, from time to time, I had parcelled by, as

trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet, at the same time, I did not care to destroy; I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book.

CLV.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

My dear Sir,

Domfrick.

It is indeed with the highest satisfaction, that I congratulate you on the return of "days of ease, and nights of pleasure," after the horrid hours of misery, in which I saw you suffering existence when I was last in Ayrshire. I seldom pray for any body.

"I'm haich dead-sweer, and wretched ill
o't."

But most fervently do I beseech the great Director of this world, that you may live long and be happy, but that you may live no longer than while you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reverent care of your health. I know you will make it a point, never, at one time, to drink more than a pint of wine; (I mean an English pint,) and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time; and that cold draughts you will never more taste. I am well convinced too, that after drinking, perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill, late hour. Above all things, as I understand you are now in habits of intimacy with that *Boomer* of gospel

* See p. 169.

powers, *Father Auld*,^{*} be earnest with him that he will wrestle in prayer for you, that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising, the carnal moral works of *charity, humanity, generosity, and forgiveness*; things which you practised so flagrantly, that it was evident you delighted in them; neg-

* The Rev. William Auld was then minister of Manchinlee. He was of a morose and malicious disposition; and, having quarrelled with Mr. Hamilton's father, sought every occasion of revenging himself on the son. In his sermons he enforced the gloomy and revolting doctrines of Calvin. He was also extremely bigoted and superstitious. The following specimens will show his desire to provoke and irritate the object of his malignity:—

He refused to baptize Mr. Hamilton's child because that gentleman hesitated to expiate four offences of which he had been guilty. The first was, that he now and then rode on horseback on the Lord's day—or, as Burns has humorously paraphrased it—

"He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
And pricks the beast as it were Monday." +

—the second, that he had ordered a few potatoes to be dug up in his garden on Sunday (for which he was cited before the Kirk authorities)—the third, that he dined in a public-house on a King's birthday, with two gentlemen, where they were heard to whistle and sing after dinner—and the fourth, that he had the impudence to say, "Damn it," in the presence of Mr. Auld himself!

All this idle and venomous folly, tended, as might be expected, to alienate the mind of Mr. Hamilton both from the parson and his pulpit. Father Auld and his adherents charged him with neglect of religion and disrespect for his professors. The Poet took his friend's part, and extolled his elevation of sentiment, his readiness to forgive injuries, and his active benevolence, as opposed to the fanaticism and the outward appearance of holiness assumed by his opponents. His sentiments on this subject are given in this letter with considerable address; but he is more explicit and ironical in the Dedication of his Poems to Mr. Hamilton.

+ See p. 143.

lecting, or perhaps, profoundly despising, the *wholesome doctrine* of "Faith without works, the only anchor of salvation."

A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present; and in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press it on you to be diligent in chanting over the two inclosed pieces of sacred poetry. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours in the Lord,

R. B.

CLVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

IN LONDON.

Dumfries, Dec. 20, 1796.

I have been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country, and did not return until too late to answer your letter; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route; and now I know not what is become of you, or whether this may reach you at all. God grant that it may find you and yours in prospering health and good spirits! Do let me hear from you as soon as possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend Captain Miller, I shall, every leisure hour, take up the pen, and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poetry, sermon or song. In this last article I have abounded of late. I have often mentioned to you a superb publication of Scottish songs, which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honour to preside over the Scottish verse, as no less a personage than Peter Pindar does over the English.

December 29.

Since I began this letter, I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here: and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary, and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period, when I shall be appointed in full form; a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

This is the season (New-year's day is now my date) of wishing; and mine are most fervently offered up for you! May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged, is my wish for my own sake, and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day I was a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast over my frame. With all my follies of youth, and, I fear, a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had, in early days, religion strongly impressed on my mind. I have nothing to say to any one as to which sect he belongs to, or what creed he believes; but I look on the man, who is firmly persuaded of infinite Wisdom and Goodness superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in his lot—I felicitate such a man as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay in the hour of difficulty, trouble, and distress; and a never failing anchor of hope, when he looks beyond the grave.

January 14.

You will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend the Doctor, long ere this. I hope he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I dare say for the hundred and fiftieth time, his *View of Society and Manners*; and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of any body but of Dr. Moore. By the by, you have deprived me of *Zeluca*; remember that, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.*

CLVII.

TO MRS. R * * * * *

January 20, 1796.

I cannot express my gratitude to you for allowing me a longer perusal of *Anacharis*. In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obligation you have laid us under. Indeed to me, the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society! as *Anacharis* is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the Muses.

The health you wished me in your morning's card, is I think, flown from me for ever. I have not been able to leave my bed to-day till about an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend, and I am ill able to go in quest of him.

* Edward.

CLVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

January 31, 1796.

These many months you have been two pawns in my debt—what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend, I am utterly at a loss to guess. Alas! Madam! ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed, have been before my own door in the street.

"When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried night
That shuts, for ever shuts, life's doubtful day."

CLIX.

TO MRS. R*****.

Who had desired him to go to the Birth-day Assembly, to show his loyalty.

June 4, 1796.

I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatism, I meet every face with a greeting, like that of Balak to Balaam—"Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy me Israel!" So say I—Come, curse me

that east wind; and come, defy me the north! Would you have me, in such circumstances, copy you out a love song?

I may, perhaps, see you on Saturday, but I will not be at the ball. Why should I?

"Man delights not me, nor woman either."

Can you supply me with the song *Let us all be unhappy together*—do if you can, and oblige *le pauvre miserable*.

R. B.

CLX.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,

EDINBURGH.

Dumfries, July 4, 1796.

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me. Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that elasticity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia.

You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world, because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us: and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the Poet to far other and more important concerns, than studying the brilliancy of wit or the pathos of sentiment.

However, *Hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. Your work is a great one; and now that it is nearly finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet I will venture to prophecy, that to future ages, your publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of her's, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present *The Scots Musical Museum*.* If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *Fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon.

Yours ever,

ROBERT BURNS.

CLXI.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Brow, Sea-bathing Quarters, July 7, 1796.

My dear Cunningham,

I received yours here this moment, and am indeed highly flattered with the approbation of the literary circle you mention—a literary circle inferior to none in the two kingdoms. Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more. For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the

last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me—pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled! But I can no more on the subject; only the medical folks tell me, that my last and only chance is bathing, and country-quarters, and riding.

The deuce of the matter is this. When an exciseman is off duty his salary is reduced to 3*l*. instead of 5*l*!. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country-quarters—with a wife and five children at home—on 3*l*! I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our commissioners of excise to grant me the full salary. I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*. If I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.

I have sent you one of the songs. The other my memory does not serve me with, and I have no copy here; but I shall be at home soon, when I will send it you. Apropos to being at home, Mrs. Burns threatens in a week or two to add one more to my paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of *Alexander Cunningham Burns*. My last was *James Gilmcalru*; so you can have no objection to the company of nobility. Farewell.

CLXII.

TO MRS. BURNS.

Brow, Thursday.

My dearest Love,

I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to pro-

* It was in this humble and delicate manner that Burns requested a copy of a work of which he was the principal founder, and to which he had contributed, gratefully, one hundred and eighty-four original, shared, or collected songs. Such an instance of generosity seldom occurs.

duce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think it has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow; porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear by Miss Jess Lewis, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday.

Your affectionate husband,

R. B.

CLXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Madam, Brow, July 12, 1796.

I have written you so often without receiving any answer, that I would not

trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *burn whence no traveller returns*. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!*

R. B.

* This is supposed to be the last production of Burns. He died on the 21st of the month, nine days after. We have already expressed our doubts (p. 34.) that he received, during this interval, a satisfactory explanation of this woman's silence. The mere assertion of Dr. Currie, that he did so, is of very little value.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

CLARINDA.

THE following Letters were, with the exception of one only, written by Burns before his marriage. They are printed *verbatim* from the originals; and where any of them are torn, which unfortunately is the case with two or three, the deficiencies are marked by *points*.

The Lady to whom they are addressed, seems to have encouraged a friendly correspondence with the Poet, whose fascinating powers of mind must necessarily have produced, on her part, esteem and admiration.

It was natural to expect from the strong sensibility of Burns, that, in his correspondence with a young and amiable woman, love would be the principal theme. He accordingly displays that passion in all its purity and fervour. The whole strength of his mind seems called into exertion. His language is free, lofty, and glowing; his periods are more than ordinarily voluble; and his sentiments agitate by their fire and vehemence. The reader feels hurried on as if borne away by a torrent. His heart is warmed and affected; and, when he closes the series, he pronounces the composition elegant and touching.

It is difficult to imagine how these interesting effusions could incur the censure of the most stubborn pretender to virtue. Yet Dr. Currie refused to give them to the world. That timorous worshipper of the aristocracy and clergy, to whose narrow prejudices he was always ready to mutilate or sacrifice the finest passages of Burns, dreaded the publication of his Letters to Clarinda.

It affords us, therefore, the most sincere pleasure, that the liberality of the Lady herself has enabled us to lay before the Public an additional portion of the writings of our favourite Author. Nor is this liberality the effect of vanity; since the Letters themselves furnish no clue by which she can be discovered. She is content to be ushered into immortality without any other distinction than that of a fictitious name.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

CLARINDA.

I.

Saturday Evening.

I can say with truth, Madam, that I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have had that very great pleasure. I was intoxicated with the idea; but an unlucky fall from a coach has so bruised one of my knees, that I cannot stir my leg; so if I do not see you again, I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin. I was vexed to the soul I had not seen you sooner. I determined to cultivate your friendship with the enthusiasm of religion; but thus has Fortune ever served me. I cannot bear the idea of leaving Edinburgh without seeing you. I know not how to account for it, I am strangely taken with some people; nor am I often mistaken. You are a stranger to me; but I am an odd being. Yet some unnamed feelings, things, not principles, but better than whims, carry me farther than boasted reason ever did a philosopher.

Farewell! every happiness be yours!

II.

Madam,

Thursday Evening.

I had set no small store by my tea-drinking to-night, and have not often been so disappointed. Saturday evening I shall embrace the opportunity with the greatest pleasure. I leave this town this day se'nnight, and probably for a couple of twelve-months; but must ever regret that I so lately got an acquaintance I shall ever highly esteem, and in whose welfare I shall ever be warmly interested.

Our worthy common friend, in her usual pleasant way, rallied me a good deal on my new acquaintance; and, in the humour of her ideas, I wrote some lines, which I enclose you, as I think they have a good deal of poetic merit; and Miss ——— tells me that you are not only a critic but a poetess. Fiction, you know, is the native region of poetry; and I hope you will pardon my vanity in sending you the bagatelle as a tolerable off-hand *jeu d'esprit*. I have several poetic trifles, which I shall gladly leave with Miss ——— or you, if they were

worth house-room, as there are scarcely two people on earth by whom it would mortify me more to be forgotten, though at the distance of ninescore miles.

I am, Madam, with the highest respect,

Your very humble servant.

III.

Friday Evening.

I beg your pardon, my dear Clarinda, for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday. I really do not know what I wrote. A gentleman, for whose character, abilities, and critical knowledge, I have the highest veneration, called in, just as I had begun the second sentence; and I would not make the purter wait. I read to my much respected friend several of my own bagatelles, and, among others, your lines, which I had copied out. He began some criticisms on them as on the other pieces, when I informed him they were the work of a young lady in this town, which, I assure you, made him stare. My learned friend seriously protested, that he did not believe any young woman in Edinburgh was capable of such lines; and if you know any thing of Professor Gregory, you will neither doubt of his abilities nor his sincerity.

I do love you, if possible, still better for having so fine a taste for poetry. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way; but you may erase the word, and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please, in its place. I believe there is no holding converse, or carrying on correspondence with an amiable woman, much less a *gloriously available fine woman*, without some mixture of that delicious passion whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being. But why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession

for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add to it the generous, the honourable sentiments of manly friendship; and I know but one more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank, ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries; it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

I enclose you a few lines I composed on a late melancholy occasion. I will not give above five or six copies of it at all; and I would be hurt if any friend should give any copies without my consent.

You cannot imagine, Clarinda (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind), how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I do not know if you have a just idea of my character; but I wish you to see me as I am. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange *Will-o'-the-wisp* being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are pride and passion. The first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honour. The last makes me a devotee, to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship; either of them, or altogether, as I happen to be inspired.

It is true, I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you at that once! Do not think I flatter you, or have a design upon you, Clarinda. I have too much pride for the one, and too little cold contrivance for the other. But of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permanent impression—I say the most permanent, because I know myself well, and

how far I can promise either on my prepossessions or powers.

Why are you unhappy? and why are so many of our fellow-creatures, unworthy to belong to the same species with you, bleat with all they can wish? You have a hand, all-benevolent to give; why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed, gloriously formed, for all the most refined luxuries of love; why was that heart ever wrung? O Clarinda! shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being, where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of benevolence; and where the chill north-wind of prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment? If we do not, man was made in vain! I deserved most of the unhappy hours that have lingered over my head. They were the wages of my labour. But what unprovoked demon, malignant as hell, stole upon the confidence of unmitrusting busy Fate, and dashed your cup of life with undeserved sorrow!

Let me know how long your stay will be out of town. I shall count the hours till you inform me of your return. Cursed *etiquette* forbids your seeing me just now; and so soon as I can walk I must bid Edinburgh adieu. Lord, why was I born to see misery which I cannot relieve, and to meet with friends whom I cannot enjoy! I look back with the pang of unavailing avarice on my loss in not knowing you sooner. All last winter—these three months past—what luxury of intercourse have I not lost! Perhaps, though, it was better for my peace. You see I am either above, or incapable of dissimulation. I believe it is want of that particular genius. I despise design, because I want either coolness or wisdom to be capable of it.

I am interrupted. Adieu! my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

IV.

Monday Evening, Eleven o'Clock.

Why have I not heard from you, Clarinda! To-day I expected it; and before supper, when a letter to me was announced, my heart danced with rapture. But, behold! it was some fool who had taken into his head to turn poet; and made me an offering of the first fruits of his nonsense. It is not poetry, but prose run mad. Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr. Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet. The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose notes. I was sitting in a merchant's shop of my acquaintance, waiting somebody. He put Elphinstone in my hand, and asked my opinion of it. I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did.*

I am determined to see you, if at all possible, on Saturday evening. Next week I must sing,

"The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I mean was;
There's neither friend nor foe of mine
But wishes that I were swa."

"What I have done for lack o' wit,
I never, never can recall;
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet,
Gude night and joy be wi' you a'."

If I could see you sooner, I would be so much the happier; but I would not purchase the dearest gratification on earth, if it must be at your expense in worldly censure; far less, inward peace.

I shall certainly be ashamed of this scrawling whole sheet of incoherence. The only unity (a sad word with poets and critics!) in my ideas, is Clarinda. There my heart "reigns and revels."

* See p. 109.

"What art thou, Love? whence art those charms?"

That thus thou hear'st an universal rule!
For thee the soldier quits his arms,
The king turns slave, the wise man fool!

"In vain we chase thee from the field,
And with cool thought resist thy yoke;
Next tide of blood, alas! we yield,
And all those high resolves are broke!"

I like to have quotations for every occasion. They give one's ideas so pat, and save one the trouble of finding expressions adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c. an embodied form in verse; which, to me, is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says, finely, of his muse,

"Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe!

Who found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

My limb has been so well to-day, that I have gone up and down stairs often without my staff. To-morrow, I hope to walk once again on my own legs to dinner. It is only next street. Adieu!

Sylvander.

V.

Sunday Night.

The impertinence of fools has jolted with a return of an old indisposition to make me good for nothing to-day. The paper has lain before me all this evening, to write to my dear Clarinda, but

"Fools rush'd on fools as waves succeed to waves."

I cursed them in my soul. They carelessly disturbed my meditations on her who holds my heart. What a creature is man! A little alarm last night and to-day, that I am mortal, has made

such a revolution on my spirits! There is no philosophy, no divinity, comes half so home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves Heaven. It is the wild raving of an imaginary hero in Bedlam.

I can no more, Clarinda. I can scarce hold up my head; but I am happy you do not know it, you would be so angry.

Monday Morning.

I am, my lovely friend, much better this morning, on the whole; but I have a horrid languor on my spirits.

"Sick of the world, and all its joy,
My soul in pining sadness mourns;
Dark scenes of woe my mind employ,
The past and present in their turns."

Have you ever met with a saying of the great and likewise good Mr. Locke, author of the famous Essay on the Human Understanding? He wrote a letter to a friend, and directed it, "Not to be delivered till after my decease." It ended thus: "I know you loved me when living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is, that this life affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of having done well, and the hopes of another life. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you."

Clarinda, may I reckon on your friendship for life? I think I may. Thou Almighty Preserver of men! thy friendship, which hitherto I have too much neglected, to secure it shall, all the future days and nights of my life, be my steady care! The idea of my Clarinda follows:

"Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, her lov'd idea lies."

But I fear that inconstancy, the con-

sequent imperfection of human weakness. Shall I meet with a friendship that defies years of absence, and the chances and changes of fortune? Perhaps such things are. One honest man I have great hopes from that way; but who, except a romantic writer, would think on a love that could promise for life, in spite of distance, absence, chance, and change; and that too with slender hopes of fruition? For my own part, I can say to myself in both requisitions, "Thou art the man!" I dare, in cool resolve, I dare declare myself that friend and that lover. If womankind is capable of such things, Clarinda is. I trust that she is; and feel I shall be miserable if she is not. There is not one virtue which gives worth, or one sentiment which does honour to the sex, that she does not possess superior to any woman I ever saw. Her exalted mind, aided a little perhaps by her situation, is, I think, capable of that nobly-romantic love-enthusiasm.

May I see you on Wednesday evening, my dear angel? The next Wednesday again will, I conjecture, be a hated day to us both. I tremble for censorious remarks for your sake; but, in extraordinary cases, may not usual and useful precaution be a little dispensed with? Three evenings, three swift-winged evenings, with pinions of down, are all the past. I dare not calculate the future. I shall call at Miss ——'s to-morrow evening. It will be a farewell.

I have wrote out my last sheet of paper, so I am reduced to my one half-sheet. What a strange mysterious faculty is that thing called Imagination! We have no ideas almost at all of another world; but I have often amused myself with visionary schemes of what happiness might be enjoyed by small alterations; alterations that we can fully enter into in this present state of existence. For instance, suppose you and I just as we are

at present! the same reasoning powers, sentiments, and even desires; the same fond curiosity for knowledge and remarking observation in our minds; and imagine our bodies free from pain, and the necessary supplies for the wants of nature at all times, and easily, within our reach. Imagine, farther, that we were set free from the laws of gravitation which bind us to this globe, and could at pleasure fly, without inconvenience, through all the yet un conjectured bounds of creation, what a life of bliss would we lead, in our mutual pursuit of virtue and knowledge, and our mutual enjoyment of friendship and love!

I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan; but I am certain I would be a happy creature, beyond any thing we call bliss here below; nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you too. Don't you see us, hand in hand, or rather, my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or, surveying a comet flaming innoxious by us, as we just now would mark the passing pomp of a travelling monarch; or, in a shady tower of Mercury or Venus, dedicating the hour to love, in mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment, while the most exalted strains of poetry and harmony would be the ready, spontaneous language of our souls.

Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart; so it is of mine. What incentives, then, to, and powers for, reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the fervours of adoration and praise to that Being, whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired every sense and feeling!

By this time, I dare say, you will be blessing the neglect of the mould that leaves me destitute of paper.

SILVANDER.

VI.

Tuesday Evening.

I cannot go out to-day, my dearest Clarinda, without sending you half a line, by way of a sin-offering; but, believe me, it was the sin of ignorance. Could you think that I intended to hurt you by any thing I said yester-night? Nature has been too kind to you for your happiness. Your delicacy, your sensibility, O why should such glorious qualifications be the fruitful source of woe! You have "murdered sleep" to me last night. I went to bed, impressed with an idea that you were unhappy; and every start I closed my eyes, busy Fancy painted you in such scenes of romantic misery, that I would almost be persuaded you are not well this morning.

....."If I, unwee'ting, have offended,
Impose it not."

....."But while we live,
But one short hour, perhaps, between us two
Let there be peace."

If Mary is not gone by the time this reaches you, give her my best compliments. She is a charming girl, and highly worthy of the noblest love.

I send you a poem to read till I call on you this night, which will be about nine. I wish I could procure some potent spell, some fairy charm, that would protect from injury, or restore to rest, that bosom chord "trembling alive all o'er," on which hangs your peace of mind. I thought—vainly I fear—thought that the devotion of love—love strong as even you can feel—love guarded, invulnerably guarded by all the purity of virtue, and all the pride of honour—I thought such a love might make you happy. Will I be mistaken! I can no more for hurry.

VII.

My ever dearest Clarinda,

I make a numerous dinner-party wait me while I read yours and write this. Do not require that I should cease to love you, to adore you in my soul. It is to me impossible. Your peace and happiness are to me dearer than my soul. Name the terms on which you wish to see me, to correspond with me, and you have them. I must love, pine, mourn, and adore in secret. This you must not deny me. You will ever be to me,

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my
heart."

I have no patience to read the puritanic scrawl. Vile sophistry! Ye heavens! thou God of nature! thou Redeemer of mankind! ye look down with approving eyes on a passion inspired by the purest flame, and guarded by truth, delicacy, and honour. But the half-inch soul of an unfeeling, cold-blooded, pitiful, Presbyterian bigot, cannot forgive any thing above his dungton bosom and foggy head.

Farewell! I will be with you to-morrow evening; and be at rest in your mind. I will be yours in the way you think most to your happiness. I dare not proceed. I love, and will love you; and will, with joyous confidence, approach the throne of the Almighty Judge of men, with your dear idea, and will despise the scum of sentiment and the mist of sophistry.

SYLVANDER.

VIII.

You are right, my dear Clarinda. A friendly correspondence goes for nothing, except one write his undisguised senti-

ments. Yours please me for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are yours; which, I assure you, is to me a high recommendation.

Your religious sentiments, Madam, I revere. If you have, on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learned that I despise or ridicule so sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend. "I am not mad, most noble Festus."

Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance, I am perhaps tired with and shocked at a life, too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies. By degrees I grow sober, prudent, and stately pious. I say stately, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character. I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change.

But let me pry more narrowly into this affair. Have I, at bottom, any thing of a secret pride in these endowments and amendments? Have I nothing of a Presbyterian sourness, a hypocritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of distinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes, that we can scarce bring them within our sphere of vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

My definition of worth is short: Truth and humanity respecting our fellow-creatures; reverence and humility in the presence of that Being, my Creator and Preserver, and who, I have every reason to believe, will one day be my Judge. The first part of my definition is the creature

of unbiased instinct; the last is the child of after reflection. Where I found these two essentials I would gently note, and slightly mention any attendant flaws—the marks, the consequences of human nature.

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune; but I own, I cannot, without a marked grudge, see Heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming a woman, as my friend Clarinda; and should be very well pleased at a circumstance that would put it in the power of somebody, happy somebody! to divide her attention, with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment.

You will not easily persuade me that you have not a grammatical knowledge of the English language. So far from being inaccurate, you are elegant, beyond any woman of my acquaintance, except one, whom I wish you knew.

Your last verses to me have so delighted me, that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure; and you shall see them in print in the Scots Musical Museum, a work published by a friend of mine in this town. I want four stanzas. You gave me but three; and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter. So I have taken your two verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are. The latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho. I am in raptures with it.

FRIENDSHIP.

"Talk not of love, it gives me pain,
For love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And sunk me deep in woe.

" But friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was form'd to prove ;
There welcome, win, and wear the prize,
But never talk of love."

Your friendship much can make me blest,
Oh ! why that bliss destroy ?
(only)
Why urge the odious and request,
(will)
You know I must deny ?

The alteration in the second stanza is no improvement ; but there was a slight inaccuracy in your rhyme. The third I only offer to your choice, and have left two words for your determination. The air is, *The banks of Spey*, and is most beautiful.

To-morrow evening, I intend taking a chair, and paying a visit, at Park-Place, to a much-valued old friend. If I could be sure of finding you at home (and I will send one of the chairmen to call), I would spend from five to six o'clock with you, as I go past. I cannot do more at this time, as I have something on my hands that hurries me much. I propose giving you the first call, my old friend the second, and Miss —, as I return home. Do not break any engagement for me, as I will spend another evening with you at any rate before I leave town.

Do not tell me that you are pained when your friends inform you of your faults. I am ignorant what they are ; but I am sure they must be such evanescent trifles, compared with your personal and mental accomplishments, that I would despise the ungenerous, narrow soul, who would notice any shadow of imperfections you may seem to have, any other way than in the most delicate, agreeable raillery. Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly-feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when, in their foolish officiousness, they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds

have a certain intrinsic dignity that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

You need make no apology for long letters. I am even with you. Many happy New-years to you, charming Clarinda ! I cannot dissemble, were it to shun perdition. He who sees you, as I have done, and does not love you, deserves to be damned for his stupidity ! He who loves you, and would injure you, deserves to be doubly damned for his villany ! Adieu !

STEVANER.

P. S. What would you think of this for a fourth stanza ?

Your thoughts, if love must harbour there,
Conceal'd in that thought,
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

IX.

Some days, some nights, nay, some hours, like the "ten righteous persons in Sodom," save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life. One of these hours, my dear Clarinda, blest me with yester-night.

....." One well-spent hour
In such a tender circumstance for friends,
Is better than an age of common time."

My favourite feature in Milton's Satan is, his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild, broken fragments of a noble, exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine.

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life. It is truth, every word of it, and will give a just idea of the man whom you have

honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece. Your verses I shall muse on, deliciously, as I gaze on your image in my mind's eye, in my heart's core. They will be in time enough for a week to come.

I am truly happy your head-ache is better. Oh! how can pain or evil be so daringly, unfeelingly, cruelly savage, as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

My little fellow is all my same-sake. Write me soon. My every, strongest good wishes attend you, Clarinda!

SVENDSEN.

Saturday, Noon.

I know not what I have wrote. I am pestered with people around me.

X.

Sunday Morning.

I have just been before the throne of my God, Clarinda. According to my association of ideas, my sentiments of love and friendship, I next devote myself to you.

Yester-night I was happy. Happiness "that the world cannot give." I kindle at the recollection; but it is a flame where Innocence looks smiling on, and Honour stands by, a sacred guard. Your heart, your fondest wishes, your dearest thoughts—these are yours to bestow. Your person is unapproachable, by the laws of your country; and he loves not as I do who would make you miserable.

"I burn, I burn, as when through ripen'd corn,
By driving winds the crackling flames are borne.

Now maddening, wild, I curse that fatal night;
Now bless the hour which charm'd my guilty sight.

In vain the laws their feeble force oppose;
Chain'd at his feet they groan, Love's van-
quish'd foes!—
In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye;
I dare not combat—but I turn and fly:—
Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallow'd
fire;
Love grasps his scorpions—stiff'd they ex-
pire!—
Reason drops headlong from his sacred
throne;
Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone;
Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
And rous'd wanton in forbidden fields!

By all on high adoring mortals know!
By all the conscious villain fears below!
By your dear self!—the last great oath I
swear!
Nor life nor soul were ever half so dear!"

You are an angel, Clarinda! You are surely no mortal that "the earth owns." To kiss your hand, to live on your smile, is to me far more exquisite bliss than the dearest favours that the fairest of the sex, yourself excepted, can bestow.

Sunday Evening.

You are the constant companion of my thoughts. How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! and what a placid calm, what a charming, secret enjoyment it gives, to bosom the fine feelings of friendship, and the fond throes of love! Out upon the tempest of anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful impatience, the sullen frost of lowering resentment, or the corroding poison of withered envy! They eat up the immortal part of man! If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate object of them, it would be something in their favour; but these miserable passions, like the traitor Iscariot, betray their lord and master.

Thou Almighty Author of peace, and

goodness, and love, do Thou give me the social heart that kindly tastes of every man's cup! It is a draught of joy—warm and open my heart to share it, with cordial, unenvying rejoicing! It is the bitter portion of sorrow—melt my heart with sincerely sympathetic woe! Above all, do Thou give me the manly mind, that resolutely exemplifies, in life and manners, those sentiments which I would wish to be thought to possess! The friend of my soul—there may I never deviate from the firmest fidelity, and most active kindness! Clarinda, the dear object of my fondest love—there may the most sacred, inviolate honour, the most faithful, kindling constancy, ever watch and animate my every thought and imagination.

Did you ever meet with the following lines, spoken of religion, your darling topic?

" 'Tis *rust*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,
'Tis *rust* that gilds the horror of our night.
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis *rust* that wends the blow, or kills the smart;
Disarms affliction, or repels its dart;
Within the breast bids parent raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I met with these verses very early in life, and was so delighted with them that I have them by me copied at school.

Good night, and sound rest, my dearest Clarinda!

SVLVANDER.

XI.

Tuesday Night.

I am delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion.

Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things, "O my soul, come not thou into their secrets!"

I feel myself deeply interested in your good opinion, and will lay before you the outlines of my belief.

He, who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our Judge, must be the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration; not for his sake, in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts. He is almighty and all-bounteous; we are weak and dependent. Hence, prayer and every other sort of devotion.

"He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life;" consequently, it must be in every one's power to embrace his offer of "everlasting life;" otherwise He could not, in justice, condemn those who did not.

A mind, pervaded, actuated, and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not merit heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary pre-requisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and, by divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining "everlasting life." Hence the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable, exclude themselves from eternal bliss, by their unfitness for enjoying it.

The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends, known to Himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ, a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is a guide and saviour; and who, except for our obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.

"These are my tenets, my lovely friend, and which, I think, cannot be well disputed. My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of Jamie Dean's grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire: "Lord, grant that we may lead a gude life; for a gude life makes a gude end; at least it helps weel!"

I am flattered by the entertainment you tell me you have found in my packet. You see me as I have been, you know me as I am, and may guess at what I am likely to be. I, too, may say, "Talk not of love," &c. for indeed he has plunged me "deep in woe!" not that I ever saw a woman who pleased unexceptionably, as my Clarinda elegantly says—"in the companion, the friend, and the mistress."

One, indeed, I could except—*she*, before passion threw its mists over my discernment, I knew, the first of women! Her name is indelibly written in my heart's core; but I dare not look on it—a degree of agony would be the consequence. O thou perfidious, cruel, mischief-making demon, who presidest over that frantic passion—thou mayest, thou dost poison my peace, but shalt not taint my honour! I would not, for a single moment, give an asylum to the most distant imagination that would shadow the faintest outline of a selfish gratification at the expense of her, whose happiness is twisted with the threads of my existence. May she be happy as she deserves! and if my tenderest, faithfulest friendship can add to her bliss, I shall at least have one solid mine of enjoyment in my bosom. Do not guess at these ravings.

I watched at our front window to-day, but was disappointed. It has been a day of disappointments. I am just risen from a two hours bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls, who could relish nothing in common with me but the port. "One!"

"'Tis now "witching time of night;" and whatever is out of joint in the fore-going scrawl, impute it to enchantments and spells; for I cannot look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don't care for to-morrow's criticisms on it.

You are by this time fast asleep, Clarinda. May good angels attend and guard you as constantly and faithfully as my good wishes do!

"Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces."

John Milton, I wish thy soul better rest than I expect on my pillow to-night. O for a little of the cart-horse part of human nature! Good night, my dearest Clarinda.

SYLVANDER.

XII.

Thursday Morning.

"Unlaviſh wiſdom never works in vain."

I have been tasking my reason, Clarinda, why a woman, who, for native genius, poignant wit, strength of mind, generous sincerity of soul, and the sweetest female tenderness, is without a peer; and whose personal charms have few, very, very few parallels, among her sex; why, or how she should fall to the blessed lot of a poor halrum-acalrum poet, whom Fortune had kept for her particular use to wreak her temper on, whenever she was in ill humour. One time I conjectured, that as Fortune is the most capricious Judge ever known, she may have taken, not a fit of remorse, but a paroxysm of whim, to raise the poor devil out of the mire, where he had so often and so conveniently served her as a stepping stone, and given him the most glorious boon she ever had in her gift, merely for the maggot's sake, to see how his foot

head and his fool heart will bear it. At other times, I was vain enough to think, that Nature, who has a great deal to say with Fortune, had given the coquettish goddess some such hint as—Here is a paragon of female excellence, whose equal, in all my former compositions, I never was lucky enough to hit on, and despair of ever doing so again. You have cast her rather in the shades of life. There is a certain poet of my making. Among your frolics, it would not be amiss to attach him to this master-piece of my hand, to give her that immortality among mankind, which no woman of any age ever more deserved, and which few rhymesters of this age are better able to confer.

Evening, Nine o'Clock.

I am here, absolutely unfit to finish my letter—pretty hearty after a bowl, which has been constantly plied since dinner, till this moment. I have no distinct ideas of any thing, but that I have drunk your health twice to-night, and that you are all that my soul holds dear in this world.

SYLVANDER.

XIII.

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF
DRINKING GLASSES.

Fair empress of the Poet's soul,
And queen of Portesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses.

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
The whole of human kind!

To those who love us—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!
A third—To thee and me, love!

XIV.

I was on the way, my love, to meet you (I never do things by halves) when I got your card. M — goes out of town to-morrow morning to see a brother of his who is newly arrived from ——. I am determin'd that he and I shall call on you together; so, look you, lest I should never see to-morrow, we will call on you to-night; and you may put off tea till about seven, at which time, in the Galloway phrase, "an the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale," expect the humblest of your humble servants, and his dearest friend. We only propos'd staying half an hour, "for ought we ken." I could suffer the lash of misery eleven months in the year, were the twelfth to be composed of hours like yester-night. You are the soul of my enjoyment. All else is of the stuff of stocks and stones.

SYLVANDER.

XV.

Thursday, Noon.

I am certain I saw you, Clarinda, but you don't look to the proper storey for a Poet's lodging—

"Where speculation room'd near the sky"—

I could almost have thrown myself over for very vexation. Why didn't you look higher? It has spoiled my peace for this day. To be so near my charming Clarinda! To miss her look when it was starching for me. I am sure the soul is capable of disease; for mine has convulsed itself into an inflammatory fever.

You have converted me, Clarinda. I shall love that name while I live; there is heavenly music in it. Booth and Amelia I know well. Your sentiments on that subject, as they are on every sub-

ject, are just and noble. "To be feelingly alive to kindness and to unkindness," is a charming female character.

What I said in my last letter, the powers of fuddling sociality only know for me. By yours, I understand my good star has been partly in my horizon, when I got wild in my reveries. Had that evil planet, which has almost all my life shed its baleful rays on my devoted head, been, as usual, in my zenith, I had certainly blabbed something that would have pointed out to you the dear object of my tenderest friendship, and, in spite of me, something more. Had that fatal information escaped me, and it was merely chance, or kind stars, that it did not, I had been undone. You would never have wrote me, except, perhaps, once more. Oh! I could curse circumstances, and the coarse tie of human laws, which keeps fast what common sense would loose, and which bars that happiness itself cannot give—happiness which, otherwise, love and honour would warrant! But—hold—I shall make no more "hair-breadth 'scapes."

My friendship, Clarinda, is a life-rent business. My likings are both strong and eternal. I told you I had but one male friend. I have but two female. I should have a third; but she is surrounded by the blandishments of flattery and courtship. I register in my heart's core — Miss N—— can tell you how divine she is. She is worthy of a place in the same bosom with my Clarinda. That is the highest compliment I can pay her. Farewell, Clarinda! Remember

Sylvander.

XVI.

Tuesday Evening.

That you have faults, my Clarinda, I never doubted; but I knew not where

they existed, and Saturday night made me more in the dark than ever. O Clarinda! why would you wound my soul by hinting, that last night must have lessened my opinion of you! True, "I was behind the scenes with you;" but what did I see! A bosom glowing with honour and benevolence—a mind ennobled by genius, informed and refined by education and reflection, and exalted by native religion, genuine as in the climes of heaven—a heart formed for all the glorious meltings of friendship, love, and pity—these I saw—I saw the noblest immortal soul creation ever shewed me.

I looked long, my dear Clarinda, for your letter, and I am vexed that you are complaining. I have not caught you so far wrong, as in your idea, that the commerce you have with *our* friend hurts you if you cannot tell every tittle of it to *another*. Why have you so injurious a suspicion of a good God, Clarinda, as to think that friendship and love, on the sacred, inviolate principles of truth, honour, and religion, can be any thing else than an object of his divine approbation!

I have mentioned, in some of my former scrawls, Saturday evening next. Do allow me to wait on you that evening. Oh, my angel! how soon must we part! and when can we meet again! I look forward on the horrid interval with tearful eyes. What have I lost by not knowing you sooner! I fear, I fear my acquaintance with you is too short, to make that *lasting* impression on your heart I could wish.

Sylvander.

XVII.

Saturday Morning.

Your thoughts on religion, Clarinda, shall be welcome. You may, perhaps,

distrust me, when I say it is also my favourite topic; but mine is the religion of the bosom. I hate the very idea of controversial divinity; as I firmly believe, that every honest upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the Deity.

If your verses, as you seem to hint, contain censure, except you want an occasion to break with me, don't send them. I have a little infirmity in my disposition, that where I fondly love or highly esteem, I cannot bear reproach.

"Reverence thyself," is a sacred maxim; and I wish to cherish it. I think I told you Lord Bollingbroke's saying to Swift, "Adieu, dear Swift, with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort to love me with all mine." A glorious sentiment, and without which there can be no friendship.

I do highly, very highly esteem you indeed, Clarinda. You merit it all. Perhaps, too, I scorn dissimulation. I could fondly love you. Judge, then, what a maddening sting your reproach would be. "Oh! I have sins to *Heaven*, but none to you." With what pleasure would I meet you to-day! but I cannot walk to meet the Fly. I hope to be able to see you on foot about the middle of next week.

I am interrupted. Perhaps you are not sorry for it, you will tell me. But I won't anticipate blame. O Clarinda! did you know how dear to me is your look of kindness, your smile of approbation, you would not, either in prose or verse, risk a censorious remark.

"Curs'd be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe!"

Saturday Morning.

There is no time, my Clarinda, when the conscious thrilling chords of love and

friendship give such delight, as in the pensive hours of what our favourite Thomson calls "philosophic melancholy." The sportive insects, who bask in the sunshine of prosperity—or the worms who luxuriantly crawl amid their ample wealth of earth—they need no Clarinda—they would despise Sylvander—if they durst. The family of Misfortune—a numerous group of brothers and sisters—they need a resting-place to their souls. Unnoticed—often condemned by the world—in some degree, perhaps, condemned by themselves—they feel the full enjoyment of ardent love, delicate, tender endearments, mutual esteem, and mutual reliance.

In this light I have often admired religion. In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

"Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;
'Tis this that gilds the horrors of our night."

I have been this morning taking a peep, as Young finely says, "through the dark postern of time long elaps'd;" and you will easily guess it was a rueful prospect. What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportions in some parts! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others. I knelt down before the Father of mercies, and said: "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!" I rose, eased and strengthened.

I despise the superstition of a fanatic; but I love the religion of a man. The future, said I to myself, is still before me. There let me

....."On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!"

I have many difficulties to encounter, said I; but they are not absolutely insuperable! and where is firmness of mind shown but in exertion? Mere declamation is bombast rant. Besides, whatever I am, or in whatever situation I may be,

....." 'Tis nought to me;
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes, there must be
joy!"

Saturday Night, half after Ten.

What luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yester-night! My ever dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul. But you have refined—you have exalted it—you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety. Clarinda, first of your sex!—if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget you—if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul—

"May I be lost, no eye to weep my end;
And find no earth that's base enough to
bury me!"

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! It is the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests; but where sentiment and fancy unite their sweets—where taste and delicacy refine—where wit adds the flavour, and good sense gives strength and spirit to all—what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment!—beauty and grace in the arms of truth and honour, in all the luxury of mutual love!

Clarinda, have you ever seen the picture realized? Not in all its very richest colouring.

Last night, Clarinda, but for one slight shade, was that glorious picture—

....."Innocence
Look'd gaily smiling on; while rosy Pleasure

Hid young Desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pour'd her cap luxuriant, mantling
high,
The sparkling heavenly vintage, Love and
Bliss."

Clarinda, when a Poet and Poetess of Nature's making—two of Nature's noblest productions—when they drink together of the same cup of love and bliss—attempt not, ye coarser stuff of human nature, profanely to measure enjoyment ye never can know.

Good night, my dear Clarinda.

SYLVANDER.

XVIII.

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan!" I have suffered, Clarinda, from your letter. My soul was in arms at the sad perusal. I dreaded that I had acted wrong. If I have robbed you of a friend, God forgive me. But, Clarinda, be comforted. Let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us—who spurns us without just cause—though once our bosom friend—up with a little honest pride—let him go.

How shall I comfort you who am the cause of the injury? Can I wish that I had never seen you? that we had never met? No, I never will! But have I thrown you friendless? There is almost distraction in that thought.

Father of mercies! against thee often have I sinned. Through thy grace I will endeavour to do so no more. She—who, thou knowest, is dearer to me than myself—pour thou the balm of peace into her past wounds, and hedge her about with thy peculiar care, all her future days and nights. Strengthen her tender, noble mind, firmly to suffer, and magnanimously to bear. Make me worthy of that

friendship she honours me with. May my attachment to her be pure as devotion, and lasting as immortal life. O, Almighty Goodness, hear me! Be to her, at all times, particularly in the hour of distress or trial, a friend and comforter, a guide and guard.

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord,
How sure is their defence!
Eternal Wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence!"

Forgive me, Clarinda, the injury I have done you. To-night I shall be with you; as indeed, I shall be ill at ease till I see you.

SYLVANDER.

XII.

Two o'Clock.

I just now received your first letter of yesterday, by the careless negligence of the penny post. Clarinda, matters are grown very serious with us. Then, seriously hear me, and hear me, Heaven. I met you, my dear Clarinda, by far the first of womankind, at least to me. I esteemed, I loved you at first sight. The longer I am acquainted with you, the more innate amiableness and worth I discover in you. You have suffered a loss, I confess, for my sake. But, if the firmest, steadiest, warmest friendship—if every endeavour to be worthy of your friendship—if a love, strong as the ties of nature, and holy as the duties of religion—if all these can make any thing like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you: if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyments—so help Sylvander, ye powers above, in his hour of need, as he freely gives all these to Clarinda.

I esteem you, I love you as a friend—
I admire you, I love you, as a woman,

beyond any one in all the circle of creation. I know I shall continue to esteem you, to love you, to pray for you, nay, to pray for *myself* for your sake.

Expect me at eight; and believe me to be ever, my dearest Madam, yours most entirely,

SYLVANDER.

XI.

When matters, my love, are desperate,
we must put on a desperate face—

....."On Reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man."

Or as the same author finely says, in another place—

....."Let thy soul spring up,
And lay wrong hold for help on him that
made thee."

I am yours, Clarinda, for life. Never be discouraged at all this. Look forward. In a few weeks I shall be somewhere or other out of the possibility of seeing you. Till then, I shall write you often, but visit you seldom. Your fame, your welfare, your happiness, are dearer to me than any gratification whatever. Be comforted, my love! The present moment is the worst. The lenient hand of time is, daily and hourly, either lightening the burden, or making us insensible to the weight.

None of these friends, I mean Mr. ——— and the other gentlemen, can hurt your worldly support; and of their friendship, in a little time, you will learn to be easy; and, by and by, to be happy without it. A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend—can

any body that has these be said to be unhappy! These are yours.

To-morrow evening I shall be with you about eight; probably for the last time, till I return to Ellisland. In the mean time, should any of these two unlucky friends question you respecting me, whether I am *the man*, I do not think they are entitled to any information. As to their jealousy and spying, I despise them.

Adieu, my dearest Madam!

SYLVANDER.

XXI.

Clarinda, mistress of my soul,

The measur'd time is run!

The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie;
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy!

We part—but by these precious drops,
That fill thy lovely eyes,
No other light shall guide my steps,
’Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray!

XXII.

Glasgow, Monday Evening,
Nine o’Clock.

The attraction of love, I find, is in an inverse proportion to the attraction of the Newtonian philosophy. In the system of Sir Isaac, the nearer objects are to one

another, the stronger is the attractive force. In my system, every mile-stone that marked my progress from Clarinda, awakened a keener pang of attachment to her.

How do you feel, my love! Is your heart ill at ease! I fear it. God forbid that these persecutors should harass that peace which is more precious to me than my own. Be assured, I shall ever think of you, muse on you, and, in my moments of devotion, pray for you. The hour that you are not in my thoughts—
“be that hour darkness—let the shadows of death cover it—let it not be numbered in the hours of the day!”

.....“When I forget the darling theme,
Be my songs more! my fancy paint no more!
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!”

I have just met with my old friend the Ship-Captain. Guess my pleasure. To meet you, could alone have given me more. My brother William, too, the young saddler, has come to Glasgow to meet me; and here are we three, spending the evening.

I arrived here too late to write by post; but I will wrap half a dozen sheets of blank paper together, and send it by the Fly, under the name of a parcel. You shall hear from me the next post town. I would write you a longer letter, but for the present circumstance of my friend.

Adieu, my dear Clarinda! I am just going to propose your health, by way of grace-drink.

SYLVANDER.

XXIII.

Carnock, March 2, 1798.

I hope, and am certain, that my generous Clarinda will not think my at-

leace, for now a long week, has been in any degree owing to my forgetfulness. I have been tossed about through the country ever since I wrote you; and am here returning from Dumfries-shire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn, to write you. I have been hurried with business and dissipation almost equal to the insidious decree of the Persian monarch's mandate, when he forbade asking petition of God or man for forty days. Had the venerable prophet been as busy as I, he had not broke the decree; at least not thrice a day.

I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy, intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot. He thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't mention this in writing to any body but you and ——. Don't accuse me of being fickle. I have two plans of life before me; and I wish to adopt the one most likely to procure me independence.

I shall be in Edinburgh next week. I long to see you. Your image is omnipresent to me; nay, I am convinced I would soon idolatrize it most seriously; so much do absence and memory improve the medium through which one sees the much-loved object. To-night, at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you at the Throne of Grace.

I hope, as I go home to-night, to find a letter from you at the post-office in Machlach. I have just once seen that dear hand since I left Edinburgh; a letter indeed which much affected me. Tell me, first of womankind, will my warmest attachment, my sincerest friendship, my correspondence, will they be any compensation for the sacrifices you make for my sake? If they will, they are yours.

If I settle on the farm I propose, I am just a day and a half's ride from Edinburgh. We will meet—don't you say, "Perhaps too often."

Farewell, my fair, my charming Postress! May all good things ever attend you!

I am ever, my dearest Madam, your
SYLVANDER.

XXIV.

Mongiel, March 7, 1788.

Clarinda, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness, a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more than a breach of the whole Decalogue, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth articles excepted, that I believe I shall not rest in my grave about it, if I die before I see you. You have often allowed me the head to judge, and the heart to feel the influence of female excellence. Was it not blasphemy, then, against your own charms, and against my feelings, to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion? You, my love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you; but they are the usual occurrences of life. Your future views are fixed, and your mind in a settled routine. Could not you, my ever dearest Madam, make a little allowance for a man, after a long absence, paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relations, and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes, and fears, must crowd the breast of the man of keen sensibility, when no less is on the tapis than his aim, his employment, his very existence through future life?

Now that, not my apology, but my defence is made, I feel my soul breathe more easily. I know you will go along with me in my justification—would to

Heaven you could in my adoption too!— I mean an adoption beneath the stars— an adoption where I might revel in the immediate beams of—

“She, the bright sun of all her sex.”

I would not have you, my dear Madam, so much hurt at Miss ——’s coldness. It is placing yourself below her; an honour she by no means deserves. We ought, when we wish to be economists in happiness; we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property; and those who seem to doubt, or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices or despise their judgment.

I know, my dear, you will say this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge. The one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be, what he wishes himself to be thought. The other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

I urge this, my dear, both to confirm myself in the doctrine, which, I assure you, I sometimes need; and because I know that this causes you often much disquiet.

To return to Miss ——. She is most certainly a worthy soul, and equalled by very, very few, in goodness of heart. But can she boast more goodness of heart than Clarinda? Not even prejudice will dare to say so. For penetration and discernment, Clarinda was far beyond her.

To wit, Miss —— dare make no pretence—to Clarinda’s wit, scarce any of her sex dare make pretence. Personal charms, it would be ridiculous to run the parallel. And for conduct in life, Miss —— was never called out, either much to do or suffer. Clarinda has been both, and has performed her part where Miss —— would have sunk at the bare idea.

Away, then, with those disquietudes! Let us pray, with the honest weaver of Kilbarcham, “Lord, send us a gude conceit o’ oursel!” Or, in the words of the auld sang—

“Who does me disdain, I can scorn them again,
And I’ll never mind any such foen.”

There is an error in the commerce of intimacy way of exchange, have not an equivalent to give us; and, what is still worse, have no idea of the value of our goods. Happy is our lot indeed, when we meet with an honest merchant, who is qualified to deal with us on our own terms. But that is a rarity. With almost every body we must pocket our pearls less or more; and learn in the old Scottish phrase, “to gie sic like as we get.” For this reason, one should try to erect a kind of bank, or storehouse, in one’s own mind; or, as the Psalmist says, “We should commune with our own hearts, and be still.” This is exactly.....

XXV.

I own myself guilty, Clarinda. I should have wrote you last week. But when you recollect, my dearest Madam, that yours of this night’s post, is only the third I have got from you, and that this is the fifth or sixth I have sent to you, you will not reproach me, with a

good grace, for unkindness. I have always some kind of idea, not to sit down to write a letter, except I have time and possession of my faculties, so as to do some justice to my letter; which, at present, is rarely my situation. For instance, yesterday I dined at a friend's, at some distance. The savage hospitality of this country spent me the most part of the night over the nauseous potion of the bowl. This day—sick headache—low spirits—miserable fastings, except for a draught of water or small beer. Now—eight o'clock at night—only able to crawl ten minutes walk into Mauchline, to wait the post, in the pleasurable hope of hearing from the mistress of my soul.

But truce with all this. When I sit down to write to you, all is harmony and peace. A hundred times a-day do I figure you, before your taper, your book or work laid aside as I get within the room. How happy have I been! and how little of that scantling portion of time, called the life of man, is sacred to happiness!

I could moralize to-night like a death's head—

"O! what is life, that thoughtless wish of all!

A drop of honey in a draught of gall."

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheels of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, where is God, my Maker, that giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of the air."

Give me, my Maker, to remember thee! Give me to act up to the dignity of my nature! Give me to feel "another's woe!" and continue with me that dear-loved friend that feels with mine.

The dignifying and dignified consciousness of an honest man, and the well-grounded trust in approving Heaven, are two most substantial sources of happiness.....

SYLVANDER.



XXVI.

Before you ask me, why I have not written to you, first let me be informed of you, how I shall write you? "In friendship," you say; and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of friendship to you; but it will not do. It is like Jove grasping a pop-gun, after having wielded his thunder. When I take up the pen, recollection rains me. Ah! my ever dearest Clarinda! Clarinda! What a host of Memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject. You have forbid it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your precious health is re-established, and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence which health alone can give us. My old friend has indeed been kind to you. Tell him, that I envy him the power of serving you. I had a letter from him a while ago; but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarce bear to read it. He is a good, honest fellow, and can write a friendly letter which would do equal honour to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters I have by me will witness; and though fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach now, as she did then, when he first honoured me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever—and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground that I have a right to.

You would laugh were you to see me where I am just now. Would to heaven you were here to laugh with me, though I am afraid that crying would be our first employment. Here am I set a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me—as grave and as stupid as an owl—but like that owl, still faithful to my old song—in confirmation of which, my dear Mrs. Mack, here is your good health! “May the hand-wa’ld benisons o’ Heaven bless your bonnie face; and the wretch wha skellies at your weelfare, may the auld tinkler dell get him to clout his rotten heart.” *Amen.*

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called as a toast, I constantly give you; but as your name has never passed my lips, even to my most intimate friend, I give you by the name of Mrs. Mack. This is so well known among my acquaintances, that when any married

lady is called for, the toast-master will say—“O, we need not ask him who it is—here’s Mrs. Mack!” I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian shepherdesses; that is, a round of favourite ladies, under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then, you are my Clarinda. So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness!

“In vain would Prudence, with decorous
sneer,
Point out a tem’ring world, and bid me fear!
Above that world on wings of love I rise,
I know its worm—and can that worm despise.
Wrong’d, injur’d, chann’d; unplied, un-
redress’d,
The mock’d quotation of the scorner’s jest;
Let Prudence’ direct bodements on me fall,
Clarinda, rich reward! o’erpay them all!”

I have been rhyming a little of late, but I do not know if they are worth postage. Tell me.....

SYLVANDER.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

GEORGE THOMSON.

THE following Letters and Songs may be considered as so many monuments of the genius and generosity of Burns. The work for which his assistance was solicited and obtained, was entitled, "A Selection of original Scottish Airs for the Voice; to which are added, introductory and concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Piano Forte and the Violin, by Pleyel and Kozeluch. With select and characteristic Verses, by the most admired Scottish Poets." It was projected and published by Mr. Thomson, who pocketed the whole of the emolument, manifesting a spirit very different from that of the Poet by whom he was supported.

LETTERS OF BURNS

TO

GEORGE THOMSON.

I.

Sir, Dumfries, Sept. 16, 1792.

I have this moment received your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm; only don't hurry me. "Deil tak the hindmost," is by no means the *cri de guerre* of my muse.

Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs, with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me. You know it is in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers, to approve or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication.

Apropos, if you are for *English* verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue. English verses, particularly the work of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. *Tweedside—Ah! the poor shepherd's mourning fair—Ah! Chorus, could I now but die, &c.* you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as—*To Fanny fair, could I impart, &c.*, usually set to *The Min Min O*, is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the farther prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself, at least, think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your un-

dertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright *prostitution of soul*! A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the work!"

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

R. Burns.

P. S. I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

II.

My dear Sir,

Friday Night.

Let me tell you, that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just. The songs you specify in your list have *all but* one the faults you remark in them. But who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better! For instance, on reading over *The Lea-rig*, I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough.

THE LEA-RIG.

I.

WAX o'er the hill the eastern sun
Tells hughin time is near, my jo;
And owen, frae the furrow'd field,
Return sic dowl and weary O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

II.

In mirkest glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie O,
If through that glen I gied to thee,
My ain kind dearie O.
Although the night were ne'er so wild,
And I were ne'er so weary O,
I'd meet you on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

III.

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheerie O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr. Percy's ballad to the air, *Nannie O*, is just. It is, besides, perhaps the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs, there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay peculiarly apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve or reject, as you please) that my ballad of *Nannie O*, might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune.

Now do not let it enter into your head, that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at, in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my *Nannie O*, the name of the river is horridly prosaic. I will alter it,

"Behind yon hills where LUGAR flows."

GIRVAN is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but LUGAR is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expence that it is ill able to pay; so with my best compliments to honest Allan, Gudē be wi' ye, &c.

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you *Nannie O** at length.

Your remarks on *Ewe-bughts, Maries*, are just. Still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and what with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merit of *Ewe-bughts*; but it will fill up this page.

You must know, that all my earlier love-songs were the breathings of ardent passion; and though it might have been easy, in after-times, to have given them a polish, yet that polish, to me, whose they were, and who alone perhaps cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their *race*.

MARY.

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar!

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies,
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And aye may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join,
And can't be the cause that shall part us!
The hour, and the moment o' time!

Galla Water and Auld Rob Merrie, I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on my *verses*, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplaining bigot of *spinsterdom*, but cordially to join hands with you in the furtherance of the work.

III.

Nov. 8, 1799.

If you mean, my dear Sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the *feature notes* of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, *My wife's a wanton wee thing*, if a few lines, smooth and pretty, can be adapted to it, it is all that you can expect. The following were made extempore to it; and though, on farther study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink.

* See p. 179.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'd a dearer;
And neist my heart I'll wear her
For fear my jewel tene.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warld and the care o't;
Wi' her I'll blithely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

I have just been looking over the *Cellier's bonnie Dochter*; and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss —, as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the *Cellier Laidie*, fall on and welcome.

BONNIE LESLEY.

O saw ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love has her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made another!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee;
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The Deil he could na weath thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The Powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha' na near thee;
Thou'rt like thyself, see lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonia!
That we may brag, we ha'e a lass,
There's nae again see bonnie.

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic air, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. Farewell, &c.

IV.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune—*Catharine Ogle*.

I.

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around,
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumbly!
There simmer first unfold her robes,
And there the langes tarry;
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

II.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green hirk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom;
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flaw o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

III.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursel's asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frow,
That nipt my flower see early!
Now green's the sod, and canld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

IV.

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
 I oft has kiss'd me fondly !
 And closed for aye, the sparkling glance,
 That dwell on me see kindly !
 And mould'ring now in silent dust,
 That heart that lov'd me dearly !
 But still, within my bosom's core,
 Shall live my Highland Mary.

My dear Sir, Nov. 14, 1792.

I agree with you that the song, *Katharine Ogle*, is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it; but the awkward sound *Ogle*, recurring so often in rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece.

The foregoing song pleases myself. I think it is in my happiest manner. You will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, it is the still glowing prejudice of my heart, that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of *Auld Rob Morris*. I have adopted the two first verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan, which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet lug; and do you, *sans cérémonie*, make what use you choose of the productions. Adieu! &c.

V.

Dumfries, Dec. 1, 1792.

Your alterations of my *Nannie O* are perfectly right. So are those of *My*

wife's a wauten wae thing. Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement.* Now, my dear Sir, with the freedom which characterizes our correspondence, I must not, cannot alter *Bonnie Lesley*. You are right, the word "Alexander" makes the line a little unsmooth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of Scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"For Nature made her what she is,
 And never made another!" (such a person as she is.)

This is, in my opinion, more poetical than "Nae'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: make it either way. "Caledonic," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay; but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I ever tried.

I am interrupted. Yours, &c.

VI.

AULD ROB MORRIS.†

There's auld Rob Morris that wons in you glen,
 He's the king o' gude fellows and wale o' auld men;
 He has gowd in his coffers, he has owen
 and kine,
 And so bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

* These alterations, notwithstanding the eulogy of the Poet, are as feeble and unimportant as the songs themselves. They have not been adopted in any edition of his Works.

† The two first lines are taken from an old ballad. The rest are original.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in
May;
She's sweet as the evening among the new
hay;
As blythe and as artless as the lambs on the
lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

But, oh! she's an heiress, auld Robin's a
laird,
And my daddie has naught but a cot-house
and yard;
A wooer like me mairna hope to come speed!
The wounds I must hide that will soon be
my dead.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me
nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is
gane;
I wander my lane, like a night-troubled
ghair,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burn in my
breaist.

O had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might ha' hop'd she wad smil'd upon
me!

O how past describing had then been my
bliss,
As now my distraction no words can ex-
press!

DUNCAN GRAY.*

I.

DUNCAN GRAY cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe Yule night when we were fu',
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coast her head fu' high,
Look'd askint and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

II.

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd;
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg was deaf as Ailie Craig,[†]
Ha, ha, &c.

* This song has nothing in common with the old licentious ballad of the same name, but the first line, and part of the third.

† A well-known rock in the frith of Clyde.

Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Gart his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, &c.

III.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Slighted love is air to hide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Shall I, like a fool, quo' he,
For a laughie hizzie die?
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, &c.

IV.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal,
Ha, ha, &c.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And oh! her een they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, &c.

V.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.
Maggie's was a pitcous case,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're croose and canny baith,
Ha, ha, &c.

December 4, 1792.

The foregoing I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them, or condemn them, as seemeth good in your sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.

VII.

FOORTITH CAULD.

TUNE—I had a Horse.

O ROOSTER caw'd and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yae foortith a' I could forgive,
An 'twere na for my Jeanie.

CHOIR.

O why should Fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest hands entwining?
Or why are sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?

This world's wealth when I think on,
It's pride, and a' the leave o't;
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.
O why, &c.

Her een are bonnie blue berry
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'erword aye;
She talks of rank and fashion.
O why, &c.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And see in love as I am?
O why, &c.

How blest the humble cotter's fate!
He wooes his simple dearie;
The silly bogies, wealth and state,
Can never make them eerie.
O why, &c.

GALLA WATER.

TAKEN'S brow, brow laid on Yarrow brass,
That wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow brass, nor Euxick shaws,
Can match the lads o' Galla water.

But there is one, a secret one,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine!
The bonnie lad o' Galla water.

Although his daddie was nae laird,
And though I hae nae meikle tocher;
Yae rich in kindness, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla water.

It na'er was wealth, it na'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest world's treasure!

January 1793.

Many returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication? Will these two foregoing be of any service to you. I should like to know

what songs you print to each tune, besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade; and a man, in the way of his trade, may suggest useful hints that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued C., greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.

Yours, &c.

VIII.

January 26, 1793.

I approve greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans. Dr. Beattie's Essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part, I mean to draw up an Appendix to the Doctor's Essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c. of our Scottish songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast, that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, *Lochaber* and the *Brans of Balaclava* excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scottish muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the mean time, do not you think that some of them, particularly *The Sew's Tail to Gerald*,* as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

* He afterwards composed a dunt to this tune. See No. XXXVIII.

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *safer*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste), with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His *Gregory* is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter; that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.

LORD GREGORY.

O wrek, wrek is this midnight hour;
And lood the tempests roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tower,
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some Pity on me shaw,
If Love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'na thou not the grove
By bonnie Irlwin's side,
Where frae I ow'd that virgin-love,
I lang, lang had denied?

How aften didst thou pledge and vow,
Thou wad for aye be mine!
And my fond heart, inclac true,
It ne'er mistroust thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast—
Thou daer of heav'n that flashest by,
Oh! wilt thou give me rest?

Ye maulering thunders from above
Your willing victim see!
But spare and pardon my faint love,
His wrang to Heaven and me! *

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and his MRS. soon.

IX.

MARY MORISON.

Toss—Bide ye yet.

March 20, 1793.

I.

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the tryed hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
Thou make the miser's treasure poor;
How blithely wad I bide the stare,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

* The song of Dr. Walcott, who assumed the name of Peter Pindar, is as follows:

Am I ope, Lord Gregory, thy door!
A midnight wanderer sighs:
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

Who comes wigh woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

Alas! thou heard'na a pilgrim moan,
That once was priz'd by thee;
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gav'st to love and me.

But should'st thou not poor Marian know,
I'll turn my feet and part;
And think the worms that round me blow,
Far kinder than thy heart.

II.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
 The dance gied round the lighted ba',
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
 Though this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,
 I sigh'd, and said, among them a',
 "Ye are na Mary Morison."

III.

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his,
 Whase only faut is loving thee?
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,
 At least be play to me shoun;
 A thought ungude canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

My dear Sir,

The song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stunted powers) to be always original, entertaining and witty.

What is become of the list, &c. of your songs? I shall be out of temper with you by and by. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot bear rivalry from you nor any body else.

X.

March, 1793.

WANDERING WILLIE.

Hara awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
 Here awa, there awa, hand awa hame;
 Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
 Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter-winds blew loud and could at our
 parting,
 Fears for my Willie brought tears in my
 e'e;
 Welcome now simmer, and welcome my
 Willie,
 The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild worms, in the cave of your
 slumbers,
 How your dread howling a lover alarms!
 Waken ye breezes! row gently ye billows!
 And wail my dear laddie ance mair to my
 arms!

But oh! if he's faithless, and minds na his
 Nannie,
 Flow aill between us, thou wide-roaring
 main!
 May I never see it, may I never throw it,
 But dying believe that my Willie's my
 ain!

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to de-
 termine whether the above, or the old
Thro' the lang mair be the best.

XI.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

WITH ALTERATIONS.

Oh! open the door, some pity to show,
 Oh! open the door to me, oh!
 Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
 Oh! open the door to me, oh!

Could it be blast upon my pale cheek,
 But coulder thy love for me, oh!
 The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
 Is naught to my pains free thee, oh!

The wan moon is setting behind the white
 wave,
 And time is sewing with me, oh!
 False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
 I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, oh!

* From the original song of "Here awa Willie," Burns has borrowed nothing but the second line and part of the first. The present copy is given with the author's last corrections.

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide ;

She sees his pale corse on the plain, oh !

" My true love ! " she cried, and sank down
by his side,

Never to rise again, oh !

I do not know whether this song be really mended.

XII.

April 7, 1793.

Thank you, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c., ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse, as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning-post!) and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing, *Sae merry as we a' hae been*; and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of *Colin** shall be *Good night and joy be wi' you a'!*

So much for my last words; now for a few present remarks as they have occurred at random on looking over your list.

The first lines of *The last time I came a'er the moor*, and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but in my opinion (pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay!) the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to *make or mend*. *For ever*,

* Burns here calls himself the "Voice of Colin," in imitation of Oulian, who denominates himself the "Voice of Coss."—"Sae merry as we a' hae been," and "Good night and joy be wi' you a'," are the names of two Scottish tunes.

Fortune, with thee prove, is a charming song; but *Logan burn* and *Logan brats*, are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery. I shall try that likewise; and if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of *Logan Water* (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty;

" Now my dear lad mean face his face,
Far, far free me and Logan brats."

My Patie is a lewer gay, is unequal. "His mind is never maddy," is a muddy expression indeed.

" Then I'll resign and marry Patie,
And syne my cockermaw,
He's free to tootle air or lase,
When corn rigs are bonnie."

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay or your book. My song, *Rigs of Barley*, to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it, and thresh a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. *The Lass o' Patie's Mill* is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend, Mr. Erskine, will take into his critical consideration. In Sir John Sinclair's Statistical volumes are two claims, one, I think, from Aberdeenshire, and the other from Ayrshire, for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it of the late John, earl of Loudon, I can on such authorities believe.

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon Castle with the then earl, father to earl John; and one forenoon, riding or walking out together, his lordship and Allan passed a sweet, romantic spot on Irvine water, still called *Patie's Mill*, where a bonnie lass was "redding hay, bare-headed on the green." My lord observed to Allan, that it would be a fine theme

for a song. Ramsay took the hint; and lingering behind, composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

One day I heard Mary say, is a fine song; but, for consistency's sake, alter the name *Adonis*. Were there ever such tanks published as a purpose of marriage between *Adonis* and *Mary*? I agree with you that my song, *There's naught but care on every hand*, is much superior to *Peor-sib could*. The original song, *The Mill*, *Mill O*, though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible: still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow as an English set. *The banks of the Dee* is, you know, literally *Lampis* to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it; for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sang from the tree."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen or heard on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. I wish I could hit on another stanza equal to *The small birds rejoice*, &c. I do myself honestly avow, that I think it a superior song.* *John Anderson, my jo*;† the song to this tune in Johnson's *Museum*, is my composition, and I think it not my worst; if it suit you, take it and welcome.

Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are *Tulloch-gorum*, *Lump o' Pudding*, *Tibbie Fowler*, and several

others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation. There is also one sentimental song of mine in the *Museum*, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called *Craigiebarn Wood*; and, in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of our sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it; and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. *Shepherd, I hate lost my love*, is to me a heavenly air. What would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago, which I think.....but in its original state is not quite a lady's song. I enclose an altered, not amended copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.*

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his *Lane Fair* is divine.

Yours, &c.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

XIII.

April, 1793.

I have yours, my dear Sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost.

The business of many of our tunes wanting, at the beginning, what fiddlers

* He afterwards produced three stanzas worthy of the first. See p. 314.

† See p. 192.

* Mr. Thomson, it seems, did not approve of this song even in its altered state. It does not appear in the correspondence; but it is probably the one found in his MSS. beginning—"Ye'reen I had a pint o' wine." See p. 302.

call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

" There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander through the blooming heather,"*

you may alter to

Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
Ye wander through the blooming heather.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know, I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge: but there is a quality more necessary than either, in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity. Now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, like every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces. Still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. W. proposes doing with *The last time I came o'er the moor*. Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever in the dark and narrow house—by Heaven it would be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much. Let him mend the song as the Highlander mended his gun—he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in *The Lass o' Parle's Mither* must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for

it. I am not sure if we can take the same liberty with *Corn rigs are bonnie*. Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. *Could I sail in Aberdeen*, you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, *Poor little could and restless love*. At any rate, my other song, *Green grew the rasher*, will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name; which of course would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future; let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit *Bonnie Dundee*. I send you also a ballad to the *Muir, Muir O*.

The last time I came o'er the moor, I would fain attempt to make a Scottish song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scottish airs by me which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned lugs would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air called *Jackie Hume's Lament*? I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I shall enclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum. I send you likewise, to me a beautiful little air, which I had taken down *ever* over.*

Adieu.

* The air here mentioned is that for which he wrote the ballad of "Bonnie Jean." See p. 393.

* See p. 383.

YOUNG JESSIE.

TUNE—Bonnie Dundee.

I.

Toss heaved was he, the sad twin o' the
Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the
Ayr;
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding
river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair.
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all
over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain;
Grace, beauty, and elegance fetter her lover,
And suddenly modesty fixes the chain.

II.

Oh! fresh is the rose in the gay dewy
morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young
Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose!
Love sits in her smile, a wizard enamouring,
Enthron'd in her can he deliver his law;
And still to her charms the alone is a
stranger!
Her modest demeanour's the jewel o' a'.

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

AIR—The Mill Mill O.

I.

When wild war's deadly blast was blown,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' many a sweet babe fatherless,
And many a widow mourning;
I left the lines and tented field,
Where long I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack o' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

II.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder;
And for fair Scotia hame again,
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coll,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon the winking smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

III.

At length I reach'd the bonnie glen,
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill, and trying thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted;
Wha aried I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

IV.

Wi' ather'd voice, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang,
Take pity on a sodger."

V.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever:
Quo' she, "A sodger since I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never:
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,
That gallant badge, the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o' it."

VI.

She gaz'd—the redder'd like a rose—
Sync pale like ony lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
"Are thou my ain dear Willie?"
"By Him who made you sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded."

VII.

"The war's o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
Though poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we've ne'er be parted."
Quo' she, "My grandfither left me gowd,
A mairten penceid'd fairly;
And come, my faithful sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly!"

VIII.

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's price;
The sodger's wealth is honour!

The brave poor sodger, ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger,
Remember he's his country's way,
In day and hour of danger.

MEG O' THE MILL.

Ara—Jackie Hume's Lament.

O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
And ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a claut o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

The Miller was wrappan, the Miller was
ruddy;
A heart like a lord, and a hae like a lady:
The Laird was a widdlefu' bleatin knur!—
She's left the gude fellow and taen the churl.

The Miller he hecht her a heart leal and
loving;
The Laird did address her wi' manners mair
moving:
A fine pacing horse wi' a clear chained
bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonnie side-saddle.

O was on the siller, it is see prevailin!
And was on the love that's fix'd on a
maiden!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle,
But, gie me my love, and a fig for the warl!

XIV.

April, 1793.

ELIZA.

I.

THUS—The last time I came o'er the moor.

FAREWELL thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
Ah, mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish,
To feel a fire in every vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

II.

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I feel my griefs would cover;
The burning sigh, th' unweaving groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But, oh! Eliza, hear one prayer,
For pity's sake forgive me.

III.

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wilt while it endur'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had dur'd me:
Th' unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming rain.

My dear Sir,

I had scarcely put my last letter in the post-office, when I took up the subject of *The last time I came o'er the moor*, and, ere I slept, drew the outlines of the foregoing. How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert any thing of mine. One hint let me give you—whatever Mr. Playel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs; I mean, in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

XV.

June, 1793.

When I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these

accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unblame me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling; but the total ruin of a much-loved friend is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the *MIN, MIN O.** What you think a defect I esteem as a positive beauty; so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Frazer, the hautboy player in Edinburgh. He is here instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well known as a reel by the name of *The Quaker's Wife*; and which I remember a grand-aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of *Liggeram coob*, my *bannie wae law*. Mr. Frazer plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it that I made a song for it which I here subjoin,

* These were the third and fourth. See p. 380.

"Wi' monie a sweet babe fatherless,
And monie a widow mourning."

Mr. Thomson, by the advice of Mr. Erskine, had substituted the following in their place:

"And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been bleat'd with mourning."

It would be difficult to imagine by what standard of taste Mr. Thomson was guided when he preferred an alteration so inferior to the original. The lines of Burns are really beautiful. He has selected the circumstances most suitable to his subject, and expressed them in his happiest manner. Those of Thomson are insipid and grovelling. He excludes the notice of the fatherless children, and disports the desolation of the widow by the use of a vulgar term, and a silly affectation of misnomers.

and inclose Frazer's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

HOPELESS LOVE.

Tune—Liggeram coob.

I.

Ever since I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless like thought and free,
As the breeze blew o'er me;
Now has langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lately is me fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

II.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring:
Trembling, I drow nocht but glow'r,
Sighing, dumb, despairing!
If the wince ease the throave
In my bosom swelling;
Underneath the grass green sod
Soon moun be my dwelling.

I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

XVI.

June 25, 1793.

Have you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of *Logan Water*; and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some pub-

lie destroyer, and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done any thing at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit.

LOGAN BRACK.

TUNE—Logan Water.

I.

O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide,
That day I was my Willie's bride;
And years dinayne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flow'ry banks appear
Like drumble winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad mae face his face,
Far, far frae me and Logan brack.

II.

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and valleys gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers;
Nyt's morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy;
My soul, delightful, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan brack.

III.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Among her seedlings sit the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile;
But I wi' my sweet murd'ring here;
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan brack.

IV.

Oh! was upon you, men o' aite,
That brethren come to deadly hate!
As ye make many a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your fleshy hearts enjoy
The widow's tear, the orphan's cry?
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan brack!

Do you know the following beautiful

little fragment, in Witherspoon's Collection of Scots Songs?

FRAGMENT.

AIR—Hughie Graham.

"O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel a drop o' dew,
Inae her bonnie breast to fu'!

"O there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-soft folds to rest,
Till day'd awa' by Phoebus' light."

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful, and quite, so far as I know, original.* It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether, unless you gave it

* A crowd of ideas of a similar nature occurs in the twentieth Ode of Anacreon. That poet, in expressing his ardour for his mistress, says—

"Would Heaven, indulgent to my vow,
The happy change I wish allow;
Thy curied mirror I would be,
That thou might'st always gaze on me;
And, could my naked heart appear,
Thou'dst see thyself—for thou art there!
Or were I made thy folding vest,
That thou might'st clasp me to thy breast!
Or, turn'd into a foam, to lave
Thy naked beauties in my wave!
Thy bosom tincture I would grow,
To warm those little hills of snow;
Thyointment, in such fragrant streams
To wander o'er thy beautiful limbs;
Thy chain of shining pearl, to deck
And close embrace thy graceful neck;
A very scandal I would be,
To tread on—if tread on by thee."

This fine original has been copied by several masters. In an epigram of Dionysius the Sophist, it is thus imitated—

"I wish I could like Zephyr steal
To waften o'er thy many vest;
And thou would'st ope thy bosom-cell,
And take me panting to thy breast!

a place. I have often tried to cke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows any thing of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

O WERE my love you lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing:

"I wish I might a rose-bud grow,
And thou would'st call me from the bower,
And place me on that breast of snow,
Where I should bloom, a win'try flower.

"I wish I were the lily's leaf,
To fade upon that bosom warm;
There I should wither, pale and brief,
The trophy of thy fairer form!"

PLATO has expressed a wish, equally fanciful, in a dithyramb preserved by Lærtius—

TO STELLA.

"Why dost thou gaze upon the sky?
Oh! that I were that spangled sphere,
And every star should be an eye,
To wonder on thy beauties here!"

In *Shakespeare*, *Romeo* wishes to be a glove—

"Oh! that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might kiss that cheek!"

And, in his *Pasionate Pilgrim*, there is an idea somewhat similar to that in the ninth and tenth lines—

"He, spying her, bouce'd in, where as he stood,
'O Jove!' quoth he, 'why was not I a flood!'"

How I wad mourn when it was torn,
By autumn wild and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthful' May its bloom renew."

XVII.

My dear Sir, July 2, 1793.

I have just finished the following ballad; and as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's *wood-note* wild, is very fond of it; and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

BONNIE JEAN.

TUNE—Bonnie Jean.

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was Bonnie Jean.

And ay she wrought her mammi's work,
And ay she sang a' merrilie;
The blithest bird upon the bush
Had na'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little linnet's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the sweetest rest.

Young Robie was the bravest lad,
The flower and pride o' the glen;
And he had owen, sheep, and kye,
And wasson naigies nine or ten.

He gart wi' Jeanie to the tryne,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere wileless Jeanie wae,
Her heart was tint, her peace was gane.

As in the bosom o' the stream,
The moon-beam dwells as dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love,
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.*

* In the original M^s. Burns asks Mr. Thomson if this stanza is not original.

And now she works her mammie's work,
And aye she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

But did na Jessie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love,
As e'enies on the lily lee?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to her's he fondly press'd,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

"O, Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear!
O canst thou think to fancy me!
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to rent the farms wi' me?"

"At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or aching eae to trouble thee;
But wray among the heather-bells,
And rent the waving corn wi' me."

Now what could ardent Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na;
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes and asterisks, so as ingenuously may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M., daughter to Mr. M. of D. one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager.

XVIII.

July, 1793.

I assure you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel.* It degrades me in my own eyes.

* Mr. Thomson had sent him five pounds as a reward for his assistance. The paltry sum might well excite humiliating ideas in the mind of the Poet.

However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that *Honneur* which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's Integrity—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transactions, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants, which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written; only, your partiality to me has made you say too much; however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautologous, or perhaps contradictory.

The Flowers of the Forest is charming as a poem, and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas beginning,

"I ha'e seen the smiling o' Fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn; I forget of what place; but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O fickle fortune, why this cruel sporting,
Why, why torment us poor sons of a day!"

The old ballad, *I wish I were where Helen lies*, is silly, to contemptibility.

My alteration of it in Johnson's is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, *Ancient Ballads* (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough forgeries) has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations; but no matter.

In my next, I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the mean time, allow me to congratulate you now as a brother of the quill. You have *committed* your character and fame; which will be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the *Sons and Daughters of Taste*—by all whom poetry can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretension to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to forecast and affirm, that your great-grandchild will hold up your volumes, and say, with honest pride—This so much admired selection was the work of my ancestor!

XIX.

August, 1793.

Your objection, my dear Sir, to the passages of my song of *Lagen Water*, is right in one instance, but it is difficult to mend it. If I can I will. The other passage you object to, does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on *Robin Adair*, and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

I.

Went larks with lute wing,
Peep'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare;

Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd over the mountains high;
Such thy morn' I did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

II.

In each bird's careless song,
Glad did I share;
While you wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Roughbuds bent the dewy spray:
Such thy bloom I did I say,
Phillis the fair.

III.

Down in a shady walk,
Doves cooling were,
I mark'd the trusty hawk
Caught in a snare:
So kind may Fortune be,
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair.

So much for nanby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for *Could hail in Aberdeen*. If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine. If not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly in the business. It is a tribute, as a man of taste, and as an editor, you owe yourself.

XI.

August, 1793.

That crinkum-crankum tune, *Robin Adair*, has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend C.'s story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my

fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice as follows :—

HAD I A CAVE.

I.

HAD I a cave on some wild distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing
roar,

There would I weep my woes,
There seek my last repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

II.

Faheen of womankind, canst thou declare,
All thy fond plighted vows—fleeing as air !
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try,
What peace is there !

By the way I have met with a musical Highlander in Broadbanc's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing Gaelic songs to both *Robin Adair* and *Gramachree*. They certainly have more of the Scotch than Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness; so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them; except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favourite airs might be common to both. A case in point. They have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called *Cann da doladh*. The fact is, in a publication of Corri's, a great while ago, you will find the same air called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is *Oran Gaeli*, and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the reverend Gaelic parson, about these matters.

XXI.

My dear Sir,

August, 1799.

Let me in this at night, I will reconsider. I am glad you are pleased with my song, *Had I a cave*, &c. as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening, with a volume of the *Museum* in my hand; when turning up *Allan Water*, "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c., as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air; and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is *Allan Water*, or *My love Annie's very bonnie*. This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a *chaining line*, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy.

THE SACRED VOW.

Tune—Allan Water.

I.

By Allan's streams I chanc'd to rove,
While Phœbus sunk beyond Benledi; *
The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready;
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthful pleasures many;
And as the wild-wood echoes rang—
O, dearly do I love thee, Annie ! †

* A mountain west of Scrutballan, 3000 feet high.

† Or, O my love Annie's very bonnie.

II.

O, happy be the woodbine bower,
 Nae nightly hogle make it eerie;
 Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
 The place and time I met my dearie!
 Her head upon my throbbing breast,
 She, sinking, said, "I'm thine for ever!"
 While momey a kiss the seal imprest,
 The sacred vow, we ne'er should sever.

III.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose brake,
 The summer joy's the flocks to follow;
 How cheery thro' her shortening day,
 Is autumn, in her weeds o' yellow!
 But can they mak the glowing heart,
 Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
 Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
 Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too (not else), you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than in all the year else. God bless you!

XXII.

August, 1793.

Is *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad*, one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but as I understand he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's Museum.

O WHISTLE, &c.

CHORUS.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;
 O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:

Tho' father and mither and a' should gae
 mad,
 O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent, when ye come to court me,
 And come na unless the back-you be a-joe;
 Sync up the back-sill, and let nabeody see,
 And come as ye were na comin to me.
 And come as ye were na comin to me.
 O whistle, &c.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
 Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na a flic:
 But send me a blink o' your bonnie black
 e'e,
 Yet look as ye were na lookin at me.
 Yet look as ye were na lookin at me.
 O whistle, &c.

Ay vow and proteot that ye care na for me,
 And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
 But court na anither, tho' jokin ye be,
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
 O whistle, &c.

Another favourite air of mine is, *The muckle o' Geordie's byre*, when sung slow with expression. I have wished that it had had better poetry; that I have endeavoured to supply as follows:—

THE WINDING NITH.

Adown winding Nith I did wander,
 To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
 Adown winding Nith I did wander,
 Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

CHORUS.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
 They never wi' her can compare;
 Whoever has met wi' my Phillis,
 Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

The daisy amas'd my fond fancy,
 So artless, so simple, so wild;
 Then emblem, said I, o' my Phillis!
 For she is simplicity's child.
 Awa, &c.

The rose-bud's the blush o' my charmer,
 Her sweet belmy lip when 'tis prest;
 How fair and how pure is the lily!
 But fairer and purer her breast.
 Awa, &c.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er with my Phillis can vie;
Her breath is the breath of the woodbine,
It's dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.
Awa, &c.

Her voice is the song of the morning
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.
Awa, &c.

But beauty, how frail and how fleeting—
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind of my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.
Awa, &c.

Mr. Clark begs you to give Miss Phillis
a corner in your book, as she is a parti-
cular flame of his. She is a Miss F. M.
sister to *Rossie Jean*. They are both
pupils of his. You shall hear from me
the very first gist I get from my rhyming
mill.

XXIII.

August, 1793.

That tune, *Could Kail*, is such a fa-
vourite of yours, that I once more revel-
out yesterday for a gloamin'-shot at the
muses; when the muse that presides over
the shores of Nith, or rather my old in-
spiring, dearest nymph, Colla, whispered
me the following. I have two reasons
for thinking that it was my early, sweet,
simple inspirer that was by my elbow,
"smooth, gliding without stop," and
pouring the song on my glowing fancy.
In the first place, since I left Colla's na-
tive haunts, not a fragment of a poet has
arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by
catching inspiration from her; so I more
than suspect that she has followed me hi-
ther, or at least makes me occasional visits;
secondly, the last stanza of this song I
send you, is the very words that Colla
taught me many years ago, and which I
set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's
Museum.

MY JEANIE.

Awa—Could Kail.

I.

Come, let me take thee to my broom,
And pledge we ne'er shall wander;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust,
The world's wealth and grandeur.
And do I hear my Jeanie own,
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone
That I may live to love her.

II.

Thus in my arms wi' all thy charms,
I clasp my counsels treasure;
I'll seek no mair o' heaven to share,
Than sit a moment's pleasure;
And by thy een we bonnie blaze,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never.

If you think the above will suit your
idea of your favourite air, I shall be
highly pleased. *The last time I came o'er*
the moor, I cannot meddle with, as to
mending it; and the musical world have
been so long accustomed to Ramsay's
words, that a different song, though po-
sitively superior, would not be so well
received. I am not fond of choruses to
songs, so I have not made one for the
forgoing.

XXIV.

August, 1793.

DAINTY DAVIE.

Now may May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

CHORUS.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scattered breezes round us blow,
A wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then through the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithful Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my ain dear Davie.

CHORUS.

Meet me on the warlock knoe,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie!
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie."

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N. B. In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is damned nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

XXV.

September, 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion of mine is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you. The very name of Peter Floder is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then; though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's

* "Dainty Davie" is the title of an old Scotch song, from which Burns has borrowed nothing but the title and the measure,

instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lag no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, *Hey tattle tattle*, may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Frazer's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many parts of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of Liberty and Independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant, royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

BRUCE TO HIS TROOPS.

BEFORE THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.

To his ain Tune.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' bands pour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By our sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyranus fall in every blow!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die! *

So may God ever defend the cause of
Truth and Liberty, as he did that day!—
Amen.

P. S. I showed the air to Urban, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

XXVI.

September, 1793.

I dare say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think that my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it. A ballad is my hobby-horse, which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless, idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed head-strong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-jingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgerrick, the bedlam jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

* This noble strain was conceived by Burns during a storm among the wilds of Glen-Ken in Galloway. It will be found in its finished state, p. 403.

The following song I have composed for *Oran-gail*, the Highland air that you tell me, in your last, you have resolved to give a place in your book. I have this moment finished the song! so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well! If not, 'tis also well!

DEPARTURE OF NANCY.

Tune—*Oran-gail*.

I.

Beaute the hour, the boat arrive,
Thou'gorn, thou'gorn of my heart!
Saver'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
You distant isle will often hail;
"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."

II.

Along the solitary shore,
While flying sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye.
Happy thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While through thy sweets the loves to stray,
Oh, tell me, does she mune on me?

XXVII.

September, 1793.

I have received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.*

Down the burn Davis. I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:—

As down the burn they took their way,
And through the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.

* Mr. Thomson's list of songs for his publication.

With, " Mary, when shall we return,
 Sic pleasure to renew ?"
 Quoth Mary, " Love, I like the burn,
 And aye shall follow you."

There's the wood, laddie. I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

Coulda' knawt. Remember, in your index, that the song, in pure English, to this tune, beginning,

"When summer comes, the swains on
 Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

Laddie, lie near me, must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am completely master of a tune, in my own singing, such as it is, I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

Gill Morice I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never song; and its place can well be supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, *Craigieburn Wood*, and *Ray's Wife*. The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the handwriting of the lady who composed it; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.*

Highland laddie. The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the new, an Italianized one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls "the old Highland laddie," which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called *Fingian Johnie*; it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum, *I has been at Craikiden, &c.* I would advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and, in the mean time, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

Auld Sir Simon. I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place, *The Quaker's Wife*.

Elythe has I been on yon bill? is one of the finest songs ever I made in my life; and besides is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include *The bonniest lass in a' the world* in your collection.

* See p. 419.

+ See p. 391.

Delistie Dowie I have heard sung nineteen thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

Fee him, father. I enclose you Frazer's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Frazer gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time when *Patie Allan's milster died, that was about the back o' midnight*; and by the lee side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the haubolds and the muse.

THE FORSAKEN LOVER.

TUNE—*Fee him, Father.*

I.

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever,
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever,
Aften hae thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever;
Now thou'rt left thy lass for aye—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.

II.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken,
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou canst love another jo,
While my heart is breaking;
Soon my weary een I'll close—

*Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Never mair to waken.**

Jeckie and Jenny I would discard, and in its place would put *There's nae Jack about the house*, which has a very pleasant air, and which is positively the finest love ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other language. *When she came hyn the babbie*, as an air, is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way, would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

Saw ye my Father? is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give more effect, is to have no startling note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—*Saw ye my father, &c.*

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.[†]

Tadlin hame. Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine; that this air is highly susceptible of pathos; accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the Museum; *Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon*. One song more, and I have done; *Auld lang yae*. The air is but *mediocre*; but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in ma-

* This is the whole of the song. The Poet never proceeded any farther.

† This song appears afterwards. It begins,

"Where are the joys I hae met in the morning?"

autscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

AULD LANG SYNE.

Scowin auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'!
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne.

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burs,
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fer,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right gude willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

Now, I suppose I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. *Gill Morice, Tracent Muir, Macpherson's Farewell, Battle of Sheriff Muir*, or *We ran and they ran*, (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history), *Hardicanute, Barbara Allan* (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared), and besides, do you know that I really have the old

tune to which *The Cherry and the Star* was sung, and which is mentioned as a well known air in Scotland's *Compliat*, a book published before poor Mary's days. It was then called *The Banks o' Helken*, an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's *History of Scottish Music*. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

XXVIII.

September, 1793.

I am happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows:—

BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

SCOTS, who hae wi' Wallace bled,
SCOTS, whom Bruce has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to glorious victory.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward!—chains and slavery!

Who will be a traitor knave?
Who can fill a coward's grave?
Who can base as he be a slave?
Traitor! coward! turn and flee!

Who for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will wrongly draw,
Free-man wad, or free-man fa',
Caledonian!—on w'e me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By our sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be—shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Forward!—let us do, or die!

N. B. I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of *Waldact*:—

"A false usurper slinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort!—I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot free for it in the world to come. Amen.

XXIX.

September, 1793.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it.* Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconsidering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!"

I have scrutinized it over and over; and to the world some way or other it shall go as it is. At the same time it will not in the least hurt me, should you leave

* Mr. Thomson proposed an alteration in the last line of each stanza. He also objected to the third line of the first stanza, as discouraging and frightful; and was anxious that a line of his own, "Now prepare for honour's bed," should be inserted in its place. Burns, however, though repeatedly urged, refused to adopt his alterations; and we may rejoice that he did so. It is the last improvement of genius and study to form a just idea of the language proper for a heroic mind in such a crisis; not the qualification of a narrow soul engaged in the sordid pursuits of life.

it out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.

I have finished my song to "Saw ye my Father?"—and in English, as you will see. That there is a syllable too much for the expression of the air, is true; but allow me to say, that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver, is not a great matter. However, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular. My advice is, to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are:—

FAIR JENNY.

TUNE—Saw ye my Father?

Where are the joys I have met in the morning,

That danced to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that sweetened my wand'ring,
At evening the wild woods among?

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair;
No more I trace the light footstep of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim early winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known,
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow;
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

Adieu, my dear Sir. The post goes; so I shall defer some other remarks until I have more leisure.

XXX.

September, 1793.

I have been turning over some volumes of songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs, for which you have allotted me to find English songs.

For "Muirhead Willie," you have, in Ramsay's Tea-table, an excellent song, beginning, "Ah! why those tears in Nelly's eyes!" As for "The Collier's Daughter," take the following old Bachelanal.

THE DELUDED SWAIN.

Deceiver vain, the pleasure
The fickle Fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure,
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion,
They are but types of woman.

O! art thou not ashamed,
To dote upon a feature?
If man thou would'st be named,
Despise the silly creature.

Go, find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

As to *McCrigra's Run-Run*, you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours, in the *Museum*, vol. II. p. 181. The song begins,

"Raving winds around her blowing."*

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the

Bank of Bannie, for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs. I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of *Reg's Wife*, for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. *Dell tak the Warr*, is a charming song; so is, *Saw ye my Peggy?* *There's war luck about the house*, well deserves a place. I cannot say that *O'er the hills and far awa*, strikes me as equal to your selection. This is no my *sin beau*, is a favourite air of mine; and if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of, *I hae laid a berrin in sawt*? I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty; and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert, *Fie, let us a' to the bridal*, to any other words than its own.

What pleases me, as simple and naïf, disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, *Fie, gie me my coggie, Sirs—Fie, let us a' to the bridal*, with several others of that cast, are to me highly pleasing; while, *Saw ye my father? or saw ye my mother?* delights me with its descriptive, simple pathos. Thus, my song, *Ken ye what Meg a' the mill has gotten?* pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but "Ilka man wears his belt his ain gait."

XXXI.

October, 1793.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas!

* See p. 188.

poor Erskine!* The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has till now scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of *The Quaker's Wife*; though, by the by, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of *Liggeram cùb*. The following verses, I hope, will please you as an English song to the air.

LOVELY NANCY.

Twine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throeb and languish;
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure;
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wand'ring love?
Night without a morning;
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

.....

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.

XXXII.

December, 1793.

Tell me how you like the following verses to the tune of *My Jo, Janet*:—

* The honourable A. Erskine, whose death Mr. Thomson had communicated to him.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

TUNE—*My Jo, Janet*.

SUE.

HUSBAND, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, Sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, Sir.

HE.

One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it man or woman, say,
My spouse, Nancy?

SHE.

If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sovereign lord,
And so good bye, allegiance!

HE.

Sad will I be to herself,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy.

SHE.

My poor heart then break it man,
My last hour I'm near it;
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think how you will bear it.

HE.

I will hope and trust in Heaven,
Nancy, Nancy,
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse, Nancy.

SHE.

Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid spirits shall haunt you.

HE.

I'll wed another, like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy.

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

TUNE—The Sailor's Dochter.

I.

Wilt thou be my dearie?
 When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
 With thou let me cheer thee?
 By the treasure of my soul,
 That's the love I bear thee!
 I swear and vow that only thou
 Shalt ever be my dearie.
 Only thou, I swear and vow,
 Shalt ever be my dearie.

II.

Laudie, say thou lo'es me;
 Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
 Say na thou'lt refuse me:
 If it winna, canna be,
 Thou for thine may choose me,
 Let me, laurie, quickly die,
 Trusting that thou lo'es me.
 Laurie, let me quickly die,
 Trusting that thou lo'es me.

XXXIII.

My dear Sir,

May, 1794.

I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased. I would humbly propose, instead of the younger knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the *durie*, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a copy of *The Gentle Shepherd*; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the greatest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Fleycl's being scooped up in France, as it will put an

entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls *The Banks of Cree*. Cree is a beautifully romantic stream; and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it:—

THE BANKS OF CREE.

HARK! the glen, and here the tower,
 All underneath the birchen shade;
 The village-bell has toll'd the hour—
 O what can say my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
 'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
 Mix'd with some warbler's dying fall,
 The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
 So calls the wood-lark in the grove,
 His little faithful mate to cheer;
 At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

"And art thou come? and art thou true?
 O welcome, dear, to love and me!
 And let us all our vows renew,
 Along the flowery banks of Cree."

XXXIV.

July, 1794.

Is there yet no news of Fleycl? Or is work to be at a dead stop until the Allies set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thralldom of democratic discords? Alas, the day! and woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of millions,

.....*

I have presented a copy of your songs

* A portion of this letter has been suppressed by Messrs. Currie and Thomson, for reasons that may be easily imagined. We are sorry that it is not in our power to restore it.

to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintry. I wrote on the blank side of the title-page, the following address to the young lady.*

XXXV.

August, 1794.

The last evening, as I was straying out, and thinking of, *O'er the hills and far away*, I spun the following stanza for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines at first; but I own that it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs; but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wallings of his love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception—*Sweet Annie frae the sea-beach came*. Now for the song.

MY SAILOR LAD.

Town—O'er the Hills and far away.

I.

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad?
How can I the thought forego,
He's on the seas to meet the foe!
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
Are wi' him that's far away.

* See p. 154.

CHORUS.

On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
Are aye wi' him that's far away.

II.

When in summer's noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in the scorching sun,
My sailor's thundering at his gun;
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate, do with me what you may,
Spare but him that's far away!
On the seas, &c.

III.

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power;
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air;
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.
On the seas, &c.

IV.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man wish brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet;
Then may heaven, with prosperous gales,
Fill my sailor welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey,
My dear lad that's far away.
On the seas, &c.

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness.

XXIV.

September, 1794.

I shall withdraw my *On the seas and far away*, altogether. It is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son; you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool,

until you produce him to the world to try him.

For that reason, I send you the offspring of my brain, *abortions* and all; and, as such, pray look over them, and forgive them, and burn them.

I am flattered at your adopting, *Ca' the yowes to the knowes*, as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others; but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

CHORUS.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather growt,
Ca' them where the burnie flows,
My bonnie dearie.

HARK the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Clouden's * woods among;
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Through the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon-ae clearly.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance as cheery.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

* The river Clouden, a tributary stream to the Nith.

Ghaist nor bogle shall thou fear;
Thou'rt us love and heaven are dear,
Nicht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast wonn my very heart;
I can die—but canna part,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

While waters wimple to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift see hie,
Till clay—could death shall blin' my e'e,
Ye shall be my dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs my first scribbling fit.

XXXVII.

September, 1794.

Do you know a Blackguard Irish song called *Onagh's Water-fall*? The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble, rustic muse, to expect that every effort of her's shall have merit; still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the *Scots Musical Museum*; and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song to the air above-mentioned for that work. If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME.

Tune—*Onagh's Water-fall*.

I.

Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eye-brows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Two laughing een o' bonnie blue.

Her smiling see wyling,
 Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
 What pleasure, what treasure,
 Unto these rosy lips to grow!
 Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
 When first her bonnie face I saw,
 And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
 She says she lo'es me best of a'.

II.

Like harmony her motion:
 Her pretty ankle is a spy
 Betraying fair proportion,
 Wad mak a saint forget the sky.
 See warming, see charming,
 Her faultless form and gracefu' air:
 Ilk feature—suld Nature
 Declar'd that she could do nae mair:
 Her's are the willing chains o' love,
 By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
 And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
 She says she lo'es me best of a'.

III.

Let others love the city,
 And gaudy show at sunny noon;
 Gle me the lonely valley,
 The dewy eve and rising moon.
 Fair beaming, and streaming,
 Her silver light the boughs among;
 While falling, recalling,
 The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
 There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
 By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
 And hear my vows of truth and love,
 And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting. We are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs derided, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathpeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be shewing disgust. For instance, I am just now

making verses for *Rebimurche's Rant*, an air which puts me in raptures; and, in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. *Rebimurche*, he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and, on his recommendation, I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.

[Here follow two stanzas of the song beginning, "Lassie wi' the flint-white locks;" which will be found at length, p. 413.]

I have begun anew, *Let me in this ae night*. Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus, and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the *drammeant* to be successful or otherwise? Should she "let him in," or not?

Did you not once propose *The Jew's Tail to Geraldine*, as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that this is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's Christian name, and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram, which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Dr. Maxwell was the physician who seemingly

saved her from the grave; and to him I addressed the following:—

TO DR. MAXWELL,

ON MISS JESSIE STAIN'S RECOVERY.

Maxwell, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessie from the grave!
An angel could not die!

Ood grant you patience with this stupid
epistle!

XXXVIII.

October 19, 1794.

My dear Friend,

By this morning's post I have your list; and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's Fly; and I wish you would call on him, and take his opinion in general. You know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, persuade you to adopt my favourite, *Craigie-burn-weed*, in your selection. It is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made, is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact (*entre nous*), is in a manner to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guiltless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now, don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any cliché-macabre about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you, that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence, could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book?

No! no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine that I fast and pray for the celestial emanation! *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe—the very one that, for his own use, was invented by the Divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus; and the witchery of her smile, the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business. If you like my idea of, *When she came ben she bobb'd*, the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly, when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas.

SAW YE MY PHELY.

(QUAINT DICKAT PHILLIE.)

Town—When she came ben she bobb'd.

O, saw ye my dear, my Phely?

O, saw ye my dear, my Phely?

She's down i' the grove,

She's wi' a new love,

She wins some hame to her Willy.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?

She lads thee to win

That she has thee forgot,

And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

O, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!

O, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!

As light as the air,

And fane as thou's fair,

Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. *The Poet* (in the Museum) is my composition; the air was taken from Mrs.

Burns's voice.* It is well known in the west country, but the old words are trash. By the by, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which *Railie Castle* is composed. The second part in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. *Strathallan's Lament* is mine; the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. *Dumnick Head*† is not mine; I would given ten pounds it were. It appeared first in "The Edinburgh Herald;"‡ and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it. *Whistle e'er the lave e'e*, is mine; § the music is said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by all the oldest musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

Andrew and his cutty Gown.¶ The song to which this is set in the Museum is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

How long and dreary is the night! I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have ar-

ranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

THE DREARY NIGHT.

Tune—*Cauld Kail* in Aberdeen.

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am free my dearie!
I resolution free e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er see weary.

CHORUS.

For, oh! her lonely nights are lang;
And, oh! her dreams are eerie;
And, oh! her widow'd heart is sair
That's absent frae her dearie.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us rear,
How can I be but eerie?
For, oh! &c.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours!
The joyless day, how dreary!
It was na use ye glimmed by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
For, oh! &c.

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a hint to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world as naked as Mr. What-d'ye-call-um has done in his London collection.*

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at *Duncan Gray*, to dress it in English; but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:—

* Mr. Risson.

* "The Poetic" will be found in p. 222 and 223. This, and the other poems of which he speaks, had appeared in Johnson's Museum; and Mr. Thomson had inquired whether they were composed by him.

† This fragment, so highly praised by Burns, has since been claimed by a Mr. Pickering of Newcastle. It will be found in the Appendix.

‡ See p. 303.

§ See p. 193.

INCONSTANCY OF NATURE.

Tune—Duncan Gray.

I.

Let not woman e'er complain,
Of inconstancy in love ;
Let not woman e'er complain,
Fickle man is apt to rove.
Look abroad through Nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change ;
Ladies, would it not be strange ?
Man should then a monster prove !

II.

Mark the winds, and mark the skies ;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow ;
Sun and moon but set to rise,
Round and round the seasons go.
Why then ask of silly man,
To oppose great Nature's plan ?
We'll be constant while we can—
You can be no more, you know.

Since the above, I have been out in the country, taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page in this odd-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got into song ; and, returning home, I composed the following :—

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE
TO HIS MISTRESS.

Tune—Dell and the Wren.

I.

Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature ?
Rory morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud, which Nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy ;
Now through the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods ;
Wild nature's creatures, freely, gladly stray :
The linewhite in his tower
Chants e'er the breathing flower ;
The lav-rock to the sky
Ascends wi' songs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the
day.

II.

Phœbus gilding the brow o' morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning ;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When abouts frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With warlike gloom o'creast my sullen sky ;
But when in beauty's light,
She meets my reviv'd sight,
When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart—
'Tis then I wake to life, to light, and joy.

If you honour my verses by setting
the air to them, I will vamp up the old
song, and make it English enough to be
understood.

I enclose you a musical curiosity, an
East Indian air, which you would swear
was a Scottish one. I know the authen-
ticity of it, as the gentleman, who brought
it over, is a particular acquaintance of
mine. Do preserve me the copy I send
you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke
has set a bass to it, and I intend putting
it into the " Medical Museum." Here
follow the verses I intend for it :—

THE AULD MAN.

I.

But lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoic'd the day,
Through gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay ;
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blast awl
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

II.

But my white pow, nae kindly thow
Shall melt the snaws of age ;
My trunk of cild, but hus or bield,
Sinks in time's wintry rage.
Oh ! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain !
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again ?

I would be obliged to you if you would

procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please—whether this miserable drawling hotch-potch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

XIXIX.

November, 1794.

Many thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present. It is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c. for your work. I intend drawing it up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious, dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c. it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work.* In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for *My lodging is on the cold ground*. On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, in my return from the visit, wrought into the following song:—

TO CHLORIS.

Tune—*My lodging is on the cold ground*.

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

* It does not appear that Burns completed this undertaking. Something of the kind has been published by Mr. Cromek; but it possesses little interest detached from the songs which were the subject of his inquiries and remarks.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings;
For Nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

Let minarels sweep the skillfu' string
In lordly lighted ha';
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe, in the birken shaw.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

The shepherd, in the flowery glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo;
The courtier tells a finer tale,
But is his heart as true?

These wild wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine;
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like mine.

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of *ma chère amie*. I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poetry as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give

me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price. Justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase!

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections to pick out songs of which the measure is somewhat similar to what I want; and, with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in *Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany*, I have cut down for an English dress to your *Dainty Davis*, as follows:—

CHARMING CHLOE.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;

From peaceful slumbers she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flow'ry mead the goos,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

CHORUS.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody,
They hail the charming Chloe.

Till painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun begin to rise,
Out-riv'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she, &c.

You may think meanly of this; but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to *Rothiemurche's Rant*; and you have Clarke to consult as to the set of the air for singing.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE
LOCKS.

TUNE—*Rothiemurche's Rant*.

CHORUS.

LASSIE wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Willst thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Willst thou be my dearie O?

Now Nature clouds the flow'ry lee,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O, wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie O?
Lassie wi', &c.

And when the welcome summer shower
Has cheer'd lik' drooping linnie flower,
We'll to the heathin' woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

When Cynthia lights wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way;
Through yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk a' love, my dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

And should the howling win'try blast
Disorb my lassie's midnight rest,
I'll fould thee to my faithful' breast,
And comfort thee, my dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral. The vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well; if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as *Deil tak the*

Warr, to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of *Saw ye my father?* By Heaven! the odds is goid to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling, low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius, Tom D'Urfey; so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan, in the *Duenna*, to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins,

"When sable night each drooping plant
restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune as follows.*

.....

There is an air, *The Caledonian Hunt's* delight, to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson.†

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon; this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer, in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend, Clarke; and, talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of

rhythm; and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is, that, in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the *black key*; but this account, which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of several years ago.

Now, to show you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed that he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a countess informed me that the first person who introduced the air into this country, was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our poetry and music! I myself have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them!

I thank you for admitting *Graigieburn Wood*; and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new *Graigieburn Wood* altogether.* My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request. It is denning your generosity; but in a moment, when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so, by a

* See the poem in its first and best dress, p. 418. The Poet remarks upon it, "I could easily throw this into an English mould; but, to my taste, in the simple and the tender of the pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scottish has an inimicable effect."

† See p. 303.

* See p. 421.

tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection; and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done; for when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

XL.

November 19, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctilious correspondent I am; though, indeed, you may thank yourself for the *tedium* of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen-blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my dust, which you was pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old.

WILLY AND PHILLY.

TURN—The Sow's Tail.

HE.

O PHILLY, happy be that day,
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthful heart was mown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, aye I'll bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou didst pledge the powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky,
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er so welcome to my eye
As is a sigh o' Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Though waking o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that through the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compar'd wi' my delight, is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weed
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is naucht so fragrant or so sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tye, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in aye,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

Wha's a' the joys that gowd can gie!
I care na wrath a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

Tell me honestly how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of

dying our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objection to the name Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish postasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me, as my co-evals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity; whereas simplicity is as much *disguise* from vulgarity on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit, on the other.

I agree with you as to the air, *Craigieburn Wood*, that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect, and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with *Rothiemurche*. There, as in *Roy's Wife of Aldivaloch*, a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with *Roy's Wife* as well as *Rothiemurche*. In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verses accordingly. Leaving out the starting note, in both tunes, has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of. Try,

"O Roy's wife of Aldivaloch."

"O Lassie wi' the lint-white locks."

and compare with,

"Roy's wife of Aldivaloch."

"LASSIE wi' the lint white locks."

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true *furor* of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid method, it is

like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste. If I am wrong I beg pardon of the *signor* *capit*.

The *Caledonian Hunt* is so charming that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, *Tedlie bairn* is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and *Andrew and his cutty gun* is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a heart-ache. Appropos to bacchanalian songs in Scottish. I composed one yesterday for an air I like much—*Lump; & Pudding*.

CONTENTMENT.

Contentment wi' little and candle wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a shelp as they're creeping along,
Wi' a cog o' gude swain, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome
thought;
But man is a lodger, and life is a floght;
My mirth and good humour are coin in my
pouch,
And my Freedom's my lairdship nae monarch
dare touch.

Atowmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a':
When at the blythe end o' our journey at
last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has
gan?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and scoyte on
her way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en led the jade
gao:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure
or pain,
My wara word is—"Welcome, and wel-
come again!"

If you do not relish this air, I will send it to Johason.

Since yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of stanzas, by way of an English song to *Roy's Wife*. You will allow me, that, in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

TO KATY.

TUNE—*Roy's Wife*.

CHORUS.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart,
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Is this thy plighted fond regard,
Thou cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?
Canst thou, &c.

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
Thou fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy!
Canst thou, &c.*

* To this address, in the character of a forsaken lover, a reply was found on the part of the lady, among the MSS. of the Poet, in the hand-writing of a female; which is perhaps that referred to in p. 401. It is as follows:—

TO WILLIE.

TUNE—*Roy's Wife*.

CHORUS.

Say, my Willie—yet believe me,
Say, my Willie—yet believe me,
For aht thou know'st na every ping
Wad wring my bosom should'st thou leave me.

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish Blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another, to be the best friends on earth), that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have at last gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the binder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up thro' the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and, lastly, an exten reed exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have, when the corn stems are green and full grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held

Tell me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven,
And when this heart proves false to thee,
Yen sun shall come in course in heaven.
Stay, my Willie, &c.

But to think I was beway'd,
That falsehood e'er our loves should undert
To take the flow'ret to my breast,
And bid the guilder's serpent under.
Stay, my Willie, &c.

Could I hope thou'd'st ne'er deceive,
Celestial pleasures, might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.
Stay, my Willie, &c.

by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back ventige like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the Braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds were wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little use of it. If Mr. Allan chooses I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in poets is nae sin;" and I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.

XL.

December, 1794.

It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do any thing to forward, or to add to the value of your book; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song, in the Museum, to *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love-song to the air, I have just framed you the following:—

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

Now in her green mantle blythe nature arrays,
And lingers the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in lilks green shaws;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa.

The snow-drop and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the west o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, as sweetly they blow,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie's awa.

Thou lav'rock, that springs frae the dew o' the lawn,
The shepherd is wae o' the grey breaking dawn;
And thou mellow mavis, that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa.

Come, autumn, soe pensive, in yellow and grey,
And sooth me wi' siddings o' nature's decay;
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snow,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa.

How does this please you? As to the point of time, for the expression, in your proposed print from my *Soldier's Return*, it must certainly be at—"She gazed." The interesting dubiety and suspense, taking possession of her countenance; and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me as things of which a master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth yours.

XLII.

January, 1795.

I fear for my songs. However, a few may please; yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years we poetic folks have been describing the spring, for instance; and as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c. of these sad rhyming folks.

A great critic, Aiken, on songs, says, that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme.

HONEST POVERTY.

I.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that;
The coward-slave we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

II.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er so poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

III.

Ye see yon kirkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha urns, and stanes, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

IV.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Gude faith he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

V.

Then let us pray, that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the carb,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

I do not give you the foregoing song
for your book, but merely by way of vive

la bagatelle; for the piece is not really
poetry. How will the following do for
Craigie-burn Wood?

CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.

Sweet fa's the eve on Craigie-burn,
And blythe awakes the morrow;
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me naught but sorrow.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing.

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet dare na for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to play me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wicher!

Farewell. God bless you!

XLIII.

February, 1796.

Here is another trial at your favourite
air:—

THE INTEREST.

TUNE—Let me in this ae night.

O LASSIE art thou sleeping yet?
Or art thou wakin, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.

* Craigie-burn Wood is situated on the
banks of the river Moffat, about three
miles distant from the village of that name,
celebrated for its medicinal waters. The
woods of Craigie-burn and of Dumerick, were
at one time favourite haunts of Burns. It
was there he met the "Lassie wi' the
Haw-white locks," and that he conceived several
of his beautiful lyrics.

CHORUS.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pley's sake, this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo.

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weest,
Nae star blinka through the driving sleet;
Tak pley on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

The bluer blast that round me blaws,
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's;
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

HER ANSWER.

O TELL na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me w' could disdain!
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
I winna let you in, jo.

CHORUS.

I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo.

The smallest blast at mirk'n hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures,
That's trusted faithless man, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed;
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weid may be her sin, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
Is now the cruel fowler's prey:
Let wicker, trusting woman say
How aften her fate's the same, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

I do not know whether it will do.

XLIV.

Ecclefechan, Feb. 7, 1795.

My dear Thomson,

You cannot have an idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yesterday to this unfortunate, wicked little village. I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress. I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up with insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing cat-gut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries, or to hang myself to get rid of them. Like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils have chosen the least, and am very drunk at your service!

I wrote to you yesterday from Dumfries, I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and Heaven knows, at present, I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—*W'e'll gang nae mair to yon town*? I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night.

XLV.

TO THE WOODLARK.

May, 1796.

TUNE—Where'll bonnie Annie lie,
Or, Loch-Ereoch side.

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing, fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that would touch her heart,
Who kills me wi' disdain.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh! nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
She notes o' woe could waken.

Then tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

Let me know, your very first leisure,
how you like this song.

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

TUNE—Aye wakin o'.

CHORUS.

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Can I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish,
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?
Long, &c.

Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror;
Slumber even I dread,
Every dream is horror.
Long, &c.

Hear me, Pow'rs divine!
Oh! in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!
Long, &c.

How do you like the foregoing?

The Irish air, *Humours of Glen*, is a great favourite of mine; and as, except the silly stuff in the *Poor Soldier*, there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows:—

CALEDONIA.

TUNE—Humours of Glen.

I.

THINE groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign
lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the
perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green
breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow
broom.

II.

Far dearer to me are yon humble broom
bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly
unseen;
For there, lightly tripping among the wild
flowers,
A-linening the linnets aft wanders my
Jean.

III.

Though rich is the breeze in their gay sunny
valleys,
And could Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skin
the proud palace,
What are they?—The haunts of the tyrant
and slave!

IV.

The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling
fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his
mountains,
Save love's willing fetters, the chains o'
his Jean.

THE GLANCE O' KINDNESS.

TUNE—Laddie lie near me.

'TWAS AS HER BONNIE BLUE E'E WAS MY RUIN;
FAIR THOUGH SHE BE, THAT WAS N'EER MY UN-
DOING:

'TWAS THE DEAR SMILE WHEN MASHODY DID
MIND US;

'TWAS THE BEWITCHING, SWEET, STOWN GLANCE
O' KINDNESS.

SAIR DO I FEAR, THAT TO HOPE IS DENIED ME,
SAIR DO I FEAR, THAT DESPAIR MASHO ABIDE ME;
BUT THOUGH FELL FORTUNE SHOULD FEAR US TO
SEVER,
QUEEN SHALL SHE BE IN MY BOSOM FOR EVER.

MARY, I AM THINE WI' A PASSION SINCERE,
AND THOU HAST PLIGHTED ME LOVE O' THE DEAREST!
AND THO' M'N THE ANGEL THAT NEVER CAN ALTER,
SOONER THE SUN IN HIS MOTION WOULD FAITER.

Let me hear from you.

XLVI.

THE HAPLESS DAUGHTER.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

TUNE—John Anderson, my Jo.

I.

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS
WHO RICHES ONLY PRIZE,
AND TO THE WEALTHY BOOBY,
POOR WOMAN SACRIFICE.
MEANWHILE THE HAPLESS DAUGHTER
HAS BUT A CHOICE OF WIFE;
TO SHUN A TYRANT FATHER'S HATE,
BECOME A WRETCHED WIFE.

II.

THE RAVENING HAWK PURSUING,
THE TREMBLING DOVE THAT FLIES,
TO SHUN IMPELLING RUIN
AWHILE HER PIOUS CRIES;
TILL OF ESCAPE DESPAIRING,
NO SHELTER OR RESCUE;
SHE TRUSTS THE RUTHLESS FALCONER,
AND DROPS BENEATH HIS FEET.

MY DEAREST CHLORIS.

TUNE—Deil tak the wars.

I.

MARK YONDER POMP OF COSTLY FASHION,
ROUND THE WEALTHY, TITLED BRIDE;
BUT WHEN COMPAR'D WITH REAL PASSION,
POOR IS ALL THAT PRINCELY PRIDE.
WHAT ARE THE SHOWY TREASURES?
WHAT ARE THE NOISY PLEASURES?
THE GAY, GADDY GLARE OF VANITY AND ART;
THE POLISH'D JEWEL'S BLAZE
MAY DRAW THE WOND'RING GAZE,
AND COURTLY GRANDEUR BRIGHT
THE FANCY MAY DELIGHT,
BUT NEVER, NEVER CAN COME NEAR THE HEART.

II.

BUT DID YOU SEE MY DEAREST CHLORIS,
IN SIMPLICITY'S ARMY?
LOVELY AS YONDER SWEET SLEEPING FLOWER IS,
SHRINKING FROM THE GAZE OF DAY.
O THEN THE HEART ALARMING,
AND ALL RESISTLESS CHARMING,
IN LOVE'S DELIGHTFUL FEVERS SHE CHAINS THE
WILLING SOUL!
AMBITION WOULD DISOWN
THE WORLD'S IMPERIAL CROWN,
EVEN Avarice WOULD DENY
HIS WORSHIPP'D DEITY,
AND FEEL THROUGH EV'RY VEIN LOVE'S RAPTOROUS
ROLL.

Well! this is not amiss. You see how
I answer your orders. Your tailor could
not be more punctual. I am just now in a
high fit of poetizing, if the strait-jacket
of criticism don't cure me. If you can
in a post or two administer a little of the
intoxicating potion of your applause, it
will raise your humble servant's phrenzy
to any height you want. I am at this
moment holding "high converse" with
the muses, and have not a word to throw
away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

XLVII.

May, 1795.

Ten thousand thanks for your elegant
present; though I am ashamed of the

value of it, being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it as a first-rate production. My phiz is *not* *knave*peckle, that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break open the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an *ill-deedie damed*, *wee rumble-garie* *urchin* of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which even at two days auld I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nichol; after a certain friend of mine who is one of the masters of a grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend, Cunningham; and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me, in a manner introduced me—I mean a well known military and literary character, Colonel Biron.

You do not tell me how you like my two last songs. Are they condemned?

XLVIII.

In *Whistle and I'll come to you my lad*, the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:—

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;

Though father and mither, and a' should gas-
mad,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning; a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment; and dispute her commands if you dare!

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

TUNE.—This is no my ain Home.

CHORUS.

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair though the lassie be;
O wae ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye wae may wi' the fairest place;
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

She's bonnie, blooming, straight and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And aye it charms my very soul,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

A thief me pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg as light are lovers' sen,
When kind love is in the e'e.
O this is no, &c.

It may escape the country sparks,
It may escape the learned clarks;
But wae the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last! He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet contains two

songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend Cunningham.

I enclose the sheet open, both for your inspection and that you may copy the song, *O bonnie was yon rosy brier*. I do not know whether I am right; but the song pleases me, and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly roused celestial spark will soon be smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses, to the air of, *I wish my love was in a mire*; and poor Erskine's English lines may follow.

THE HOPELESS LOVER.

I.

Now spring has clad the groves in green,
And urew'd the lee wi' flowers;
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
Rejoice in foaming showers;
While like thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe!

II.

The trout within yon wimplin burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was once that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry

III.

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder clif that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae reader visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the withering blast
My youth and joy consume.

IV.

The waken'd lark-rock warbling springs
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blythe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;

As little recks I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' winching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

V.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whose doom is, "Hope nas
nair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whose bosom, woe despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

THE ROSY BRIER.

TUNE—I wish my love was in the mire.

O bonnie was yon rosy brier,
That blooms as far frae haunt o' man;
And bonnie she, and, ah! how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon rosebuda in the morning dew,
How pure among the leaves as green!
But purer was the lover's vow
They winna'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
In joys and griefs alike resign.

XLIX.

THE FORLOREN LOVER.

TUNE—Let me in this ae night.

FORLOREN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe,
At which I must resign, love.

CHORUS.

O wert thou, love, but near me,
But near, near, wear me,
How kindly thou would'st cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blains each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in those arms of thine, love.
O wert thou, &c.

Cold, aker'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.
O wert thou, &c.

But dreary though the moment's fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.
O wert thou, &c.

How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour. So much for the *speed* of my Pegasus; but what say you to his *bottom*?

L.

THE BRAW WOOER.

Tune—The Lushien Lasse.

LAST May a braw wooer cam down the lang
glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I heard like men—
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me, to be-
lieve me,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me.

He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked, for Jesus—
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying.

A weel-mocked mailen, himsel for the laird,
And marriage, all-hand, were his proffers;
I never loo on that I ken'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur
offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or
less,
The deil tak his name to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin
Bess;
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her,
could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the next week, as I froned wi' care,
I gae to the tryse o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there?
I glower'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glower'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shoulder I gl'e'd him a
blink,
Lest neighbors might say I was stoupy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear
lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fa' country and weter,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin?
And how her new thoon fit her auld shackl'd
feet?
But, heavens! how he fell a-swearin, a-
swarin,
But, heavens! how he fell a-swearin.

He begged, for Gudsake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
So, e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-
morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

* In the original MS. this line runs,

"He up the Garslack to my black cousin
Bess."

Mr. Thomson objected to "Garslack," and
"Dalgarnock," in the next verse, as harsh
and unpoetical. Burns replied as follows:—

"Garslack is the name of a particular
place, a kind of passage up among the Law-
ther hills, on the confines of this county.
Dalgarnock is also the name of a romantic
spot near the Nisb, where are still a ruined
church and a burial-ground. However, let
the first run, 'He up the lang loan, &c.'"

It is to be regretted that any thing should
be thrown out that gives locality to the verses
of Burns.

FRAGMENT.

TUNE—The Caledonian Hunt's delight.

WAW, why tell thy lover,
Bless he never must enjoy?
Why, why undecieve him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

O why, while fancy, rapour'd, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris, all the theme,
Why, why would'st thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?

Such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the tooth-ache, so have not a word to spare.

LL

February, 1796.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. Burns, and for my remaining volume of Peter Pindar. Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs, in octavo, with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words; and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

TUNE—Balinamona cra.

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's charms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms;

O, gie me the lass that has acres of charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

CHORUS.

Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
The nice yellow guinea for me.

Your beauty's a flower in the morning that
blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green
knows,
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie
white pinks.
Then hey, &c.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has
blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy when
posset;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie
impress,
The langer ye ha'e them—the mair they're
carest.
Then hey, &c.

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs, I dislike one thing—the name of Chloris. I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady; but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad. Of this, and some things else, in my next.* I have more amendments to propose. What you once mentioned of "flaxen locks" is just. They cannot enter into an *elegant* description of beauty. Of this also again. God bless you!

LIL

April, 1796.

Alas! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I time my lyre again. "By Babel streams I have sat and wept," almost ever since I wrote you

* Burns never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris.

lost. I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness; and have counted time by the repercussions of pain. Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Fergusson,

"Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe tavern here, which for these many years has been my *steyff*, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squoze.

I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan's etchings. *Woe'd and married and a'* is admirable. The *gripping* is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire *Turnim-spik*. What I like least is, *Jenny said to Jeckey*. Besides the female being in her appearance. . . . If you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathise with him. Happy am I to think that he has yet a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a subject.

LIII.

My dear Sir,

I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired, *Here's a health to them that's awa, biny*; but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it.

JESSE.

THOU—Here's a health to them that's awa,
biny.

CROOK.

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers
meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jenny!

Although thou maun never be mine,
Although even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jenny!

I mourn through the gay gandy day,
Ah, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lock'd in thy arms—Jenny!
Here's a health, &c.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling e'e;
E'en, why urge the tender confession,
'Gainst fortune's fell, cruel decree—Jenny?
Here's a health, &c.*

LIV.

This will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so, when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for

* In the letter to Mr. Thomson, the three firstanzas only are given. Among his MSS. however, was found the fourth, which completes this song, the last finished offspring of his muse.

either the originals or copies.* I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights; but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout. A sad business!

Do let me know how Cleghora is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

L.V.

Brow, on the Solway Frith,
July 12, 1793.

After all my boasted independence, cruel necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnest-

* It is hardly necessary to observe, that Burns did not live to carry this design into execution.

ness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half-distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the latest song genius you have seen. I tried my hand on *Rochiemurche* this morning. The measure is so difficult, that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR.

Tune—*Rochiemurche*.

CHORUS.

Fairest maid on Devon's banks,
Crysal Devon, winding Devon,
With thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do?

FULL well thou know'st I love thee dear,
Could'st thou so malice lend an ear?
O, did not love exclaim, "Forbear,
Nor use a faithless lover so."
Fairest maid, &c.

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear,
No love but thine my heart shall know.
Fairest maid, &c.*

* These verses, and the letter enclosing them, were written in a character that marked the very feeble state of the Poet's bodily strength. He died on the 21st of this month.

SCRAP-BOOK,
SKETCHES, AND JOURNALS
OF BURNS.

It has been the object of the Editor of the present Edition, to omit nothing that tends to illustrate the character and feelings of Burns at the different periods of his life. His Scrap Book, which has only been given partially by Dr. Currie, is therefore printed at length. It extends from April, 1783, to October, 1785.

In the spring of 1787, he procured a second book, for the purpose of recording in it sketches of characters and events. His intentions, however, were very imperfectly executed. He mentions few or no incidents; and his delineations of character are not numerous. This MS. has not yet been printed entire, as some of the remarks relate to individuals still in existence.

The Journals consist of a few memorandums made during his tour through several parts of his native country.

SCRAP-BOOK,

SKETCHES, AND JOURNALS

OF BURNS.

THE SCRAP-BOOK.

OBSERVATIONS, HINTS, SONGS,

SCRAPS OF POETRY,

&c.

BY ROBERT BURNS,

A man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational. As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinged with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really his own, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature, to see how a ploughman thinks, and feels, under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified

by the *modes* and *manners* of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species.

There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print.

SHAKESPEARE.

Fleeting, when youth has long expired, to trace

The forms our pencil or our pen design'd!
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,

Such the soft image of our youthful mind.

Idem.

April, 1788.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young, inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen, in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

August.

There is certainly some connexion between love, and music, and poetry; and therefore I have always thought a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love composition :—

"As towards her cot he jogg'd along,
Her name was frequent in his song."

For my own part, I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet, till I got once heartily in love; and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest, warm simplicity; unacquainted, and uncorrupted, with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of her then, but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end.

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass, &c.—See p. 195.

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies or crimes have made us miserable and wretched—to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper

penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,

Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when, to all the evil of misfortune,
The sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self!"

Or worse far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—

Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;

The young, the innocent who fondly lov'd us;

Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!

O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!

Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart

Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down his agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?

O, happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

March, 1784.

I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him; though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any, of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, be-

cause he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all. I say, any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults, and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye. I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of *blackguards*, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character—those who, by thoughtless prodigality, or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay, sometimes “stained with guilt,” I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues—magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

April.

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, *peculiar* to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of winter, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast; but there is something even in the

“Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
Abrupt and deep, stretch’d o’er the buried earth,”

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which en-

raptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion. My mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, “walks on the wings of the wind.” In one of those seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:—

The wintry west, &c.—See p. 115.

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verse, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, has been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say, it was, at the time, genuine from the heart.

Behind yon hills, &c.—See p. 179.

March, 1784.

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some

lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following:—

O thou great Being! &c.—See p. 116.

April.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in coming it over.

My father was a farmer, &c.—See p. 224.

April.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the grave and the merry; though, by the by, these terms do not, with propriety enough, express my ideas. The grave I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are, the men of pleasure of all denominations—the jovial lads who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but, without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature—the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent; in particular *he*, who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity; but poverty and obscurity are only evils to him who can sit gravely down and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others—and lastly, to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling.

August.

The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas, I must wait till farther experience and sicer observation throw more light on the subject. In the mean time, I shall set down the following fragment, which, as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable any body to determine which of the classes I belong to.

Green grow the rushes, &c.—See p. 180.

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that Being to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integritious conduct towards our fellow-creatures; that so, by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the pious and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave—I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such a one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours and thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare, with Ossian, Shakspeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne, &c.; or, as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a song to make or mend; and, at all times, some heart's-dear bonnie lass in view—I say, I do not see that the turn of mind and pursuits of such a one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of piety and virtue, than the, even lawful, hustling and straining after the world's riches and honour; and I do not see but that he may gain heaven as well (which, by the by, is no mean consideration), who steals through the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way; as he who, straining straight forward, and perhaps bespattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminences; where, after all, he can only see and be

seen a little more conspicuously than what, in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor, indolent devil he has left behind him.

August.

A Prayer, when fainting-fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm.

O thou unknown, &c.—See p. 115.

August.

Misgivings in the hour of *dependency* and prospect of death.

Why am I loth to leave, &c.—See p. 116.

EGOTISMS FROM MY OWN SENSATIONS.

May.

I do not well know what is the reason of it, but, somehow or other, though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved; yet I never could get the art of commanding respect. I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what Sterne calls “that understrapping virtue of discretion.” I am so apt to a *lapses flagus*, that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man that I have read of somewhere, is very much *à propos* to myself—that he was a compound of great talents and great folly.

N. B. To try if I can discover the cause of this wretched infirmity; and, if possible, to mend it.

Though cruel fate, &c.—See p. 399.

FRAGMENT.

One night as I did wander, &c.—See p. 735.

FRAGMENT.

There was a lad, &c.—See p. 183.

EPITAPH.

Here Robin lies, &c.—See p. 177.

August.

However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Ferguson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c. immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, and particularly religious, liberty have ever found their first support, and their last asylum; a country, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious Wallace, the saviour of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence, to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes on Ayr, and the healthy mountainous source, and winding sweep of Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Eddrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but alas! I am far unequal to the

task, both in native genius and education. Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet, nor young soldier's heart, ever beat more fondly for fame than mine—

"And if there is no other scene of being
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill—
This something at my heart that heaves for room,
My bow, my dearest part, was made in vain."

August.

FRAGMENT.

When first I came, &c. See p. 199.

September.

There is a great irregularity in the old Scotch songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent and measure that the English poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously, with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of *The Min, Min, O*, to give it a plain prosaic reading, it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch songs, which begins "*To Fanny fair could I impart, &c.*" is most exact measure; and yet, let them both be sung before a real critic—one above the biases of prejudice, but a thorough judge of nature—how flat and spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and lamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first. This is particularly the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable. There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions and fragments which are daily sung to them by my countrymen, the com-

mon people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scottish syllables; and yet, very frequently, nothing, not even like rhyme, or sameness of jingle, at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes, imagine that, perhaps, it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which shew them to be the work of a masterly hand; and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect, that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard's vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well—the last, the meanest of the muses' train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love. He too has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends; and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored. Like you, all his consolation was his muse. She taught him in rustic measures to complain. Happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your

hones! and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of poetry and love.

The following fragment is *done*, something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish piece, called "M'Millan's Peggy," and sings to the tune of *Galla Water*.

Although my bed, &c. See p. 303.

My Montgomerie's Peggy * was my dolly for six or eight months. She had been bred, (though, as the world says, without any just pretence for it), in a style of life rather elegant—but as Vamburgh says, in one of his comedies, my "damned star found me out" there too; for though I began the affair merely in a *gauche de cœur*, or, to tell the truth, which will scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *blanc-seur*, which I always plied myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a kind of affection for her, she told me, one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but, with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance except actual possession. I found out afterwards that what she told me of a pre-engagement was really true; but it cost me some heart-aches to get rid of the affair.

I have even tried to imitate, in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the

* The young woman to whom he addressed four letters in 1780. See p. 181, &c.

rhyme, which, when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear.

September.

There is another fragment in imitation of an old Scotch song, well known among the country *ingle-shocks*. I cannot tell the name, either of the song or the tune, but they are in fine unison with one another. By the way, these old Scottish airs are so nobly sentimental, that when one would compose to them; to *sewb the tune*, as our Scottish phrase is, over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration, and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm, so strongly characteristic of our old Scottish poetry. I shall here set down one verse of the piece mentioned above, both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times:—

"When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their norms are past and gone." *

September.

Though fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of misers, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come, misfortune, I bid thee welcome
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to

* Alluding to the misfortunes he feelingly laments before this verse. [This is Burns's note.]

undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned page viii. ;^{*} and, though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since a tempest brewing round me in the grim sky of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell, to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness. However, as I hope my poor country muse, who, all rustic, awkward, and unpolished as she is, has more charms for me than any other of the pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not then desert me—I may even then learn to be, if not happy, at least easy, and *sew with a sang* to sooth my misery.

It was at the same time I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style. I am not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps it is no great matter; but the following were the verses I composed to suit it:—

O raging fortune's, &c. See p. 304.

The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole air.

October, 1783.

If ever any young man, in the vestibule of the world, chances to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a warm attention to the following observations, as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear-bought experience. I have, literally, like that great poet and great gallant, and, by consequence, that great fool, Solomon, "turned my eyes to

behold madness and folly."[†] Nay, I have, with all the ardour of a lively, fanciful, and whimsical imagination—accompanied with a warm, feeling, poetic heart—shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity.

[Here the MS. abruptly closes.]

THE SKETCHES.

Edinburgh, April 9, 1787.

As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter to Mr. Palgrave, that "half a word fixed, upon, or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection." I don't know how it is with the world in general, but with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me, some one to be grave with me, some one to please me and help my discrimination, with his or her own remark, and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The world are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a sucker, or branch of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all the sentimental flights of novel writers, and the sage philosophy of moralists, whether

^{*} Of the original MS. See the remark, March 1784, beginning, "There was a certain period," &c. p. 435.

we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repeating his confidence.

For these reasons I am determined to make these pages my confidant. I will sketch every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes, and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, *without fraud or favour*.—Where I hit on any thing clever, my own applause will, in some measure, feast my vanity; and, begging Patroclus' and Achatas' pardon, I think a lock and key a security, at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever.

My own private story likewise, my love adventures, my rambles; the frowns and smiles of fortune on my hardship; my poems and fragments, that must never see the light, shall be occasionally inserted. In short, never did four shillings purchase so much friendship, since confidence went first to market, or honesty was set up to sale.

To these seemingly invidious, but too just ideas of human friendship, I would cheerfully make one exception—the connexion between two persons of different sexes, when their interests are united and absorbed by the tie of love—

"When thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart."

There confidence, confidence that exalts them the more in one another's opi-

nion, that endears them the more to each other's hearts, unreservedly "reigns and revels."¹ But this is not my lot; and, in my situation, if I am wise (which, by the by, I have no great chance of being), my fate should be cast with the Psalmist's sparrow, "to watch alone on the housetop."² Oh! the pity!

There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received every where, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving *honour to whom honour is due*; he meets at a great man's table, a Squire something, or a Sir somebody; he knows the noble landlord, at heart, gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes, beyond, perhaps, any one at table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an *eightpenny* tailor, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice, that are withheld from the son of genius and poverty!

The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect and love him. He shewed so much attention, engrossing attention, one day to the only blockhead at table, (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself,) that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting.—God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of the

threes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues.

With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare, or, still more, when he descends from his pinnacle, and meets me on equal ground in conversation, my heart overflows with what is called *liking*. When he neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, What do I care for him or his pomp either!

It is not easy forming an exact judgment of any one; but, in my opinion, Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintance; but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing; and a critic of the first, the very first, rank in prose; even in poetry, a bard of Nature's making can only take the *pas* of him. He has a heart, not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is truly a worthy, and most respectable character.

THE JOURNALS.

Burns had long desired to visit those parts of his native country celebrated in national song. "I have no dearer aim," said he to Mrs. Dunlop, "than to have it in my power to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately tower or venerable ruin, once the honoured abodes of her heroes." The

profits arising from the second edition of his Poems enabled him to gratify this wish to a certain extent. He was accompanied by his friend Mr. Ainslie.

JOURNAL, NO. I.

May 6, 1787.

Left Edinburgh. Lammermuir-hills miserably dreary, but at times very picturesque. Lanton-côge, a glorious view of the Merse. Reach Berrywell. Old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character; his hobbies, agriculture, natural philosophy, and politics. In the first he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with; in the other two, very intelligent. As a man of business he has uncommon merit; and, by fairly deserving it, has made a very decent independence. Mrs. Ainslie, an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable old woman. Miss Ainslie, her person a little *embarrassed*, but handsome; her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humour. She unites three qualities rarely to be found together; keen, solid penetration—sly, witty observation and remark—and the gentlest, most unaffected female modesty. Douglas, a clever, fine, promising young fellow. The family meeting with their brother,* my *compagnon de voyage*, very charming, particularly the sister. The whole family remarkably attached to their menials. Mrs. A. full of stories of the sagacity and sense of the little girl in the kitchen. Mr. A. high in the praise of an African, his house servant. All his people old in his service. Douglas's old nurse came to Berrywell yesterday to remind them of its being Douglas's birth-day.

A Mr. Dodgson, a poet at times, a worthy, remarkable character; natural penetration, a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme modesty.

* The gentleman to whom several letters, in this collection, are addressed by Burns.

Sunday. Went to church at Dunst. Dr. Bowmaker, a man of strong lungs, and pretty judicious remark; but ill-skilled in propriety, and altogether unconscious of his want of it.*

Monday. Coldstream. Glorious river Tweed; clear and majestic; fine bridge. Dine at Coldstream with Mr. Ainslie and Mr. Foreman. Beat Mr. Foreman in a dispute about Voltaire. Drink tea at Leuch-house with Mr. and Mrs. Brydone.

----- Mr. Brydone, a most excellent heart, kind, joyous, and benevolent; but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance. From his situation past and present, an admirer of every thing that bears a splendid title, or that possesses a large estate. Mrs. Brydone a most elegant woman in her person and manners; the tones of her voice remarkably sweet. My reception from Mr. and Mrs. Brydone extremely flattering. Sleep at Coldstream.

Tuesday. Breakfast at Kelso. Charming situation of the town; fine bridge over the Tweed. Enchanting views and prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scotch side. Introduced to Mr. Scot of the Royal Bank; an excellent modest fellow. Visit Roxburgh Palace; fine situation of it. Ruins of Roxburgh Castle; a holly-bush growing where

* During the discourse Burns produced a neat impromptu, conveying an elegant compliment to Miss Ainslie. Dr. Bowmaker had selected a text of Scripture that contained a heavy denunciation against obstinate sinners. At the commencement of the sermon, Burns observed the young lady turning over the leaves of her Bible with much earnestness, in search of the text. He took out a slip of paper, and, with a pencil, wrote the following lines, which he immediately presented her:—

Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue;
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant—
Not angels such as you.

James the Second was accidentally killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin, and a fine old garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English Hottentot, a *maitre d'hôtel* of the Duke's. Climate and soil of Berwickshire, and even Roxburghshire, superior to that of Ayrshire. Bad roads. Turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements.----- Low markets, consequently low lands; magnificence of farmers and farm-houses. Come up the Tiviot, and up the Jed to Jedburgh to lie, and so wish myself good-night.

Wednesday. Breakfast with Mr. Fair. ----- Charming romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens and orchards, intermingled among the houses and the ruins of a once magnificent cathedral. All the towns here have the appearance of old rude grandeur, but extremely idle. Jed, a fine romantic little river. Dined with Captain Rutherford. ----- Return to Jedburgh. Walk up the Jed with some ladies, to be shown Love-lane, and Black-burn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, and to Mr. Sommerville, the clergyman of the parish, a man and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning.

Jedburgh, Saturday. Was presented by the magistrates with the freedom of the town. Took farewell of Jedburgh with some melancholy sensations.

Monday, May 14, Kelso. Dine with the farmer's club; all gentlemen talking of high matters; each of them keeps a hunter from thirty to fifty pounds value, and attends the fox-hunting club in the country. Go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, to sleep. In his mind and manners, Mr. Ker is astonishingly like my dear old friend, Robert Muir; every thing in his house

elegant. He offers to accompany me in my English tour.

Tuesday. Dine with Sir Alexander Don; a very wet day.....Sleep at Mr. Ker's again, and set out next day for Melrose. Visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruined abbey, by the way. Cross the Leader, and come up the Tweed to Melrose. Dine there, and visit that far-famed glorious ruin. Come to Selkirk up the banks of Ettrick. The whole country herabouts, both on Tweed and Ettrick, remarkably stony.

Having spent three weeks in exploring this interesting scenery, Burns crossed over into Northumberland. Mr. Ker and Mr. Hood, two gentlemen with whom he had become acquainted in the course of his tour, accompanied him. He visited Alnwick Castle, the princely seat of the Duke of Northumberland; the hermitage and old castle of Warkworth; Morpeth, and Newcastle. In this last town he spent two days, and then proceeded to the south-west by Hexham and Wardrue, to Carlisle. After spending a day at Carlisle with his friend Mr. Mitchell, he returned into Scotland; and at Annan, his Journal terminates abruptly.

From Annan, he proceeded to Dumfries, and thence through Sanquhar, to Mosgiel, near Mauchline, in Ayrshire, where he arrived about the 8th of June.

After remaining a few days at home, he returned to Edinburgh, and immediately set out on a journey to the Highlands. Of this excursion no Journal has been discovered. A letter to his friend Mr. Ainslie, dated Arrachan, near Crochairbat, by Lochleary, June 28, 1787, commences as follows:—

I write you this on my tour through a country where savage streams tumble over savage mountains, thickly overspread with savage flocks, which starvingly support as savage inhabitants. My last stage was Inverary—to-morrow night's stage, Dumbarton. I ought sooner to have answered your kind letter, but you know I am a man of many sins.

In another letter to a friend, he relates the following particulars:—

On our return, at a Highland gentleman's hospitable mansion, we fell in with a merry party, and danced till the ladies left us, at three in the morning. Our dancing was none of the French or English insipid formal movements; the ladies sang Scotch songs like angels, at intervals; then we flew at *Bab at the Bower, Tullachgorum, Loch Erroch side,** &c. like midges sporting in the moitie sun, or crows prognosticating a storm in a hailst day. When the dear ladies left us, we ranged round the bowl till the good-fellow hour of six; except a few minutes that we went out to pay our devotions to the glorious lamp of day peering over the towering top of Beaulmond. We all kneeled; our worthy landlord's son held the bowl; each man a full glass in his hand; and I, as priest, repeated some rhyming nonsense, like Thomas the Rhymer's prophecies I suppose. After a small refreshment of the gifts of Somnus, we proceeded to spend the day on Lochlomonnd, and reached Dumbarton in the evening. We dined at another good fellow's house, and consequently pushed the bottle; when we went out to mount our horses we found ourselves "No vera fou but gylie yet." My two friends and I rode soberly down the Loch side, till by came a Highlandman at the gallop, on a tolerably good horse, but which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather. We scorned to be out-galloped by a Highlandman, so off we started, whip and spur. My companions, though seemingly gally mounted, fell sadly astern; but my old mare, Jenny Geddes, one of the Rosinante family, she strained past the highlandman in spite of all his efforts, with the hair halter; just as I was passing him, Donald wheeled his horse, as if to cross before me to mar my progress, when

* Scotch tunes.

down came his horse, and threw his rider's breeches a—c in a clipt hedge; and down came Jenny Goddes over all, and my hardship between her and the Highlandman's horse. Jenny Goddes trode over me with such cautious reverence, that matters were not so bad as might well have been expected; so I came off with a few cuts and bruises, and a thorough resolution to be a pattern of sobriety for the future.

I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, similes, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon. I was going to say, a wife too; but that must never be my blessed lot. I am but a younger son of the house of Farnesque, and like other younger sons of great families, I may intrigue, if I choose to run all risks, but must not marry.

I am afraid I have almost ruined one source, the principal one indeed, of my former happiness; that eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture. I have no paradisiacal evening interviews stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this weary world. I have only . . .

This last is one of your distant acquaintances, has a fine figure, and elegant manners; and in the train of some great folks whom you know, has seen the politest quarters in Europe. I do like her a good deal; but what piques me is her conduct at the commencement of our acquaintance. I frequently visited her when I was in —, and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured in my careless way to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to —, I wrote to her in the

same style. Miss, construing my words farther I suppose than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mountain lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured me out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favour. But I am an old hawk at the sport; and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop down at my foot like corporal Trim's hat.

As for the rest of my acts, and my wars, and all my wise sayings, and why my mare was called Jenny Goddes;* they shall be recorded in a few weeks hence, at Linlithgow, in the chronicles of your memory, by

ROBERT BURNS.

From this journey Burns returned to his friends in Ayrshire, with whom he spent the month of July. In August he again visited Edinburgh, whence he undertook another excursion, in company with Mr. Adair, afterwards Dr. Adair of Harrowgate, of which that gentleman transmitted to Dr. Currie the following account:—

"Burns and I left Edinburgh together in August, 1787. We rode by Linlithgow and Carros, to Stirling. We visited the

* This old and faithful servant of the Port's was named by him, after the old woman, who, in her zeal against religious innovation, threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, when he attempted, in 1687, to introduce the Scottish Liturgy. "On Sunday, the twenty-third of July, the Dean of Edinburgh prepared to officiate in St. Giles's. The congregation continued quiet till the service began, when an old woman, impelled by sudden indignation, started up, and exclaiming aloud, 'Villain! dost thou say the Mass at my leg?' threw the stool on which she had been sitting, at the Dean's head. A wild uproar commenced that instant. The women invaded the desk with execrations and outcries, and the Dean disengaged himself from his surplice to escape from their hands."

Laing's History of Scotland.

iron-works at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that place and its inhabitants, to the cave of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical reader, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling the prospects from the castle strongly interested him; in a former visit to which, his national feelings had been powerfully excited by the ruinous and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish parliaments had been held. His indignation had vented itself in some imprudent, but not unpoetical lines, which had given much offence, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn on which they were written.

"At Stirling we went with a company of travellers to Edinburgh, among whom was a character in many respects congenial with that of Burns. This was Nichol, one of the teachers of the High Grammar-School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation; the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow, characterized both. Jacobitical principles in politics were common to both of them; and these have been suspected, since the revolution of France, to have given place, in each, to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no *memorabilia* of their conversation, either on this or on other occasions, when I happened to meet them together. Many songs were sung; which I mention for the sake of observing, that when Burns was called on in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with a tone and emphasis, which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathetic. This he did on the present occasion.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harvieston, in Clackman-

nares, then inhabited by Mrs. Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted.* He introduced me to the family, and there was formed my first acquaintance with Mrs. Hamilton's eldest daughter, to whom I have been married for nine years. Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connection from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at Harvieston, we made excursions to visit various parts of the surrounding scenery, inferior to none in Scotland, in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; particularly Castle Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyle; and the famous Cataract of the Devon, called the *Goldron Linn*; and the *Rumbling Bridge*, a single broad arch, thrown by the Devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at about the height of a hundred feet above its bed. I am surprised that none of these scenes should have called forth an exertion of Burns' muse. But I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque. I well remember, that the ladies at Harvieston, who accompanied us on this jaunt, expressed their disappointment at his not expressing in more glowing and fervid language, his impressions of the *Goldron Linn* scene, certainly highly sublime, and somewhat horrible.

"A visit to Mrs. Bruce of Clackman-

* Mrs. Hamilton was the mother of his friend Gavin Hamilton. The Poet was particularly delighted with one of her daughters; and, according to his usual custom, celebrated her charms in a song:—

How pleasant the banks, &c.—See p. 312.

At Harvieston, also, he first became acquainted with Miss Chalmers, afterwards Mrs. Hay, to whom one of the most interesting series of his letters is addressed. See p. 353, &c.

man, a lady above ninety, the illegal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings more powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristic dignity, informed me, on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family. Though almost deprived of speech by a paralytic affection, she preserved her hospitality and urbanity. She was in possession of the hero's helmet and two-handed sword, with which she conferred on Burns and myself the honour of knighthood, remarking, that she had a better right to confer that title than *some people*. You will of course conclude that the old lady's political tenets were as Jacobitical as the Poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception and entertainment. She gave as her first toast after dinner, *Awa' Uncar*, or *Away with the strangers*. Who these strangers were, you will readily understand. Mrs. A. corrects me by saying it should be *Heel*, or *Heel uncar*, a sound used by shepherds to direct their dogs to drive away the sheep.

"We returned to Edinburgh by Kinross (on the shore of Lochleven) and Queensferry. I am inclined to think Burns knew nothing of poor Michael Bruce, who was then alive at Kinross, or had died there a short while before. A meeting between the bards, or a visit to the deserted cottage and early grave of poor Bruce, would have been highly interesting.*

"At Dunfermline we visited the ruined abbey and the abbey-church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the *catty stool*, or stool of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for fornication; while Burns,

from the pulpit, addressed to me a ludicrous reproof and exhortation, parodied from that which had been delivered to himself in Ayrshire, where he had, as he assured me, once been one of seven who mounted the *seat of shame* together.

"In the church-yard two broad flag-stones marked the grave of Robert Bruce, for whose memory Burns had more than common veneration. He knelt and kissed the stone with sacred fervour, and heartily (*animi et maneris*) execrated the worse than Gothic neglect of the first of Scottish heroes."†

JOURNAL, NO. II.

THE preceding journey did not satisfy the curiosity of Burns. He therefore again set out from Edinburgh on a more extended tour to the Highlands, in company with Mr. Nicholl, one of the teachers in the High-school, with whom he had now contracted a particular intimacy, which lasted during the remainder of his life.

August 25, 1787. This day I leave Edinburgh for a tour, in company with my good friend, Mr. Nicholl, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment.

OF WEST Lothian he says,

A fertile improved country is West Lothian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c.; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, a man of feeling, will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds, of the peasantry of Ayr.

* Extract of a letter from Dr. Adair to Dr. Currie.

† Bruce died some years before.

shire, (peasantry they are all, below the Justice of Peace,) than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he, at the same time, considers the Vandallism of their plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an unenclosed, unimproved country is to me actually more agreeable as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden.

He remarks on Linlithgow—

The town carries the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur; charmingly rural retired situation. The old Royal Palace a tolerably fine but melancholy ruin; sweetly situated by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful, injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A pretty good old Gothic church; the infamous stool of repentance, in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation.

What a poor pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship; dirty, narrow, and squalid, stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur, such as Linlithgow, and much more Melrose! Ceremony and show, if jecklously thrown in, are absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters.

At Bannockburn he expresses himself with fervour and enthusiasm—

Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant countrymen coming over the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers, noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe. I see them meet in glorious triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence.

At Taymouth, the Journal merely has—

Described in rhyme.*

At Glenlyon he remarks—

Druid's temple, three circles of stones, the outermost sunk, the second has thirteen stones remaining, the innermost eight; two large detached ones like a gate to the south-east. *Say prayers in it.*

His memorandums concerning Dunkeld and Blair of Athole are as follow—

Dunkeld. Breakfast with Dr. Stuart. Neil Gow plays; a short, stout-built, Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unmisstrusting simplicity; visit his house; Margaret Gow.

Friday. Ride up Tummel river to Blair. Fascally, a beautiful romantic nest. Wild grandeur of the pass of Gillibrankie. Visit the gallant Lord Dundee's stone.

Blair. Sup with the Duchess. Easy and happy from the manners of that fa-

* This alludes to the "Verses written with a pencil over the chimney-piece, in the parlour of the inn at Kenmore, Taymouth." See p. 108.

+ Burns gained two or three days with the Duke of Athole. On reaching Blair, he sent Mr. Walker, with whom he was previously acquainted, and who was at that time a tutor in the family, notice of his arrival. The Duke, to whom he brought a letter of introduction, was from home; but the Duchess gave him an invitation to sup and sleep at Athole-house. Much attention was paid to him both before and after the Duke's return. The young family of his Grace attracted his admiration; and he drank their health as "honest men and bonnie lasses," an idea which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem on the Falls of Bruar. See p. 103.

mily. Confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.

Saturday. Visit the scenes round Blair. Fine, but spoilt with bad taste.

From Blair, says he, I passed—

Many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream to Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music, Badenoch, &c. till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed in which, tradition says, King Duncan was murdered; lastly, from Fort George to Inverness.

From Inverness, he went along the Murray Frith, to Fochabers, taking Calloden-muir and Brodie-house in his way. Of the two last he observes—

Thursday. Came over Calloden-Muir; reflections on the field of battle. Breakfast at Kilsick.* Old Mrs. Rose; sterling sense, warm heart, strong passions, honest pride—all to an uncommon degree; a true chieftain's wife, daughter of Clephane. Mrs. Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother, perhaps owing to her being younger. Two young ladies; Miss Rose sung two Gaelic songs—beautiful and lovely; Miss Sophy Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them! Brodie-house to lie. Mr. B. truly polite, but not quite the Highland cordiality.

Friday. Cross the Findhorn to For-

res. Famous stone at Forres. Mr. Brodie tells me the muir, where Shakespeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting, is still haunted; that the country folks won't pass by night.

Elgin. Venerable ruins of the abbey; a grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.

He was next introduced to Gordon Castle, where he dined with the Duke and his family.

Cross Spey to Fochabers. Fine palace, worthy of the noble, the polite, the generous proprietor.† The Duke makes me happier than ever great man did; noble, princely, yet mild; condescending, and affable—gay and kind. The Duchess charming, witty, kind, and sensible. God bless them.‡

* In the course of the preceding winter, Burns had been introduced to the Duchess of Gordon at Edinburgh; and presuming on this acquaintance, he proceeded to Gordon-Castle, leaving Mr. Nichol at the inn in the village. At the castle he was received with the utmost hospitality and kindness; and the family being about to sit down to dinner, he was invited to take his place at table. This invitation he accepted, and after drinking a few glasses of wine, he rose up, and proposed to withdraw. On being pressed to stay, he mentioned, for the first time, his engagement with his fellow-gravelier; and his noble host offering to send a servant to conduct Mr. Nichol to the castle, Burns insisted on undertaking that office himself. He was, however, accompanied by a gentleman, a particular acquaintance of the Duke, by whom the invitation was delivered in all the forms of politeness. The invitation came too late. At Athole-house Nichol's impatience was suspended, by engaging him in his favourite amusement of angling; but as no such device was adopted at Gordon-castle, he broke out with unmanageable irritability, and compelled the Poet to abridge his visit. Sensible, however, of the great kindness of the noble family, he made the best return in his power, by composing the song entitled "Castle Gordon."—See p. 325.

* Commonly spelt Kilsrock, the seat of a very ancient family.

† See also Letter to Mr. Walker, p. 292.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen; thence to Stonehive, where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations.*

The rest of our stages are not worth rehearsing. Warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing towns or fertile carsest†

He arrived once more at Edinburgh, on the 16th of September, having travelled about six hundred miles in two-and-twenty days. During this journey he extended his acquaintance, and visited some of the most classical scenery of the north. He likewise observed something of Highland manners, which must have been as interesting as they were novel to him; and strengthened considerably, among the sordy Jacobines of the mountains, those political opinions which he at that period avowed.

Of the poems which he composed during this tour, we have already referred to three. While standing by the Fall of Fyers, near Lochness, he wrote with his pencil the vigorous couplets—

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods, &c.
See p. 106.

When at Sir William Murray's of Ochertyre, he celebrated the charms of Miss Murray in the song—

Blythe, blythe, and merry was she, &c.
See p. 190.

And the verses, "On scaring some Water-fowl in Loch Turit"—

Why ye scannas of the lake, &c.
See p. 104.

were composed under the same roof. In several of his subsequent productions we

* Letter to Gilbert Burnes. See p. 232.

† Ibid.

find many traces of the delight with which he had contemplated nature in these mountainous regions.

The following Pieces ought to have been inserted among the Epigrams, Epitaphs, &c.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF A BANK NOTE.

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief:
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
I've seen the children of affliction
Unsided through thy curs'd restriction.
I've seen th' oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil;
And for thy potency vainly wish'd,
To crush the villain in the dust!
For lack o' thee I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

KYLE.

R. B.

EPITAPH

ON MISS JESSY LEWARS.

This young lady, complaining of some slight indisposition, Burns told her he should take care to prepare an Epitaph, in case of the worst. On her getting well, he added an Epigram to the Epitaph.

SAY, sages, what's the charm on earth,
Can turn death's dart aside?
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessy had not died.

ON HER RECOVERY.

But rarely seen since Nature's birth,
The natives of the sky;
Yet still one Seraph's left on earth,
For Jessy did not die.

APPENDIX.

The following articles are intended to illustrate several passages in the writings of Burns, and to enable the reader to judge, whether some of the efforts of his predecessors were worthy of the vivid impression which they made on his mind. "The Life and Age of Man" is now of rare occurrence, and is one of the productions with which his earliest years was most familiar. The simple song, written by Lapraik, deserves to be preserved for its tenderness of sentiment, and its fine strain of domestic endearment. The stanzas of Roscoe will be found not unworthy of their subject.

APPENDIX.

I.

I had taken the last farewell of my few friends—my chest was on the road to Greenock—I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, "The gloomy night is gathering fast"—when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening a new road to my poetic ambition.

See p. 27.

DR. BLACKLOCK

TO THE REV. MR. G. LAWRIE.

Reverend and dear Sir,

I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and, perhaps, one of the most genuine entertainments, of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems: at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force and beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonish-

ment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

Mr. Stewart, professor of morals in this university, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers; but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman to whom I shewed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published in my memory.*

* A copy of this letter was sent by Mr. Lawrie to Mr. Gavin Hamilton, and by him communicated to the Poet, among whose papers it was found. For an account of Mr. Lawrie and his family, see the letter of Gilbert Burns to Dr. Currie, p. 53.

"Dr. Blacklock," says Burns, "belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope." It was a fortunate circumstance that the individual whom Dr. Lawrie applied to, happened also to be the person best qualified to render the application successful. Dr. Blacklock was an enthusiast in his admiration of an art which he practised himself with applause. Though his poetry has been forgotten, he will be remembered for the benignity and goodness of his heart.

II.

There was no ring among the reas,
 Above them a' it pleas'd me best,
 That some kind husband had address
 To some sweet wife;
 It thirl'd the heart-strings through the breast,
 A' to the life.

See p. 129.

The song here alluded to was written by Mr. Lapraik after sustaining a considerable pecuniary loss. In consequence of some connexion as security for several persons concerned in the Ayr Bank, he was obliged to sell his farm of Dalfram, near Muirkirk. One day, while his wife was fretting over their misfortunes, he composed it with a view to moderate her grief, and fortify her resignation. It is as follows:—

I.

WHEN I upon thy bosom lean,
 And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
 I glory in the sacred tie
 That made us one, who once were twain;
 A mutual flame inspires us both,
 The tender look, the melting kin;
 Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,
 But only gie us change o' bliss.

II.

Hae I a wish? it's a' for thee;
 I ken thy wish is me to please;
 Our momentous pain we smooth away,
 That numbers on us look and gaze:

Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,
 Nor Envy's sel finds ought to blame;
 And aye when weary cares arise,
 Thy bosom still shall be my home.

III.

I'll lay me there, and take my rest,
 And if that aught disturb my dear,
 I'll bid her laugh her cares away,
 And beg her not to drop a tear.
 Hae I a joy? it's a' her ain:
 United still her heart and mine;
 They're like the woodbine round the tree,
 That twin'd till death shall them disjoin.

III.

Wow, but your letter made me vammie!
 See p. 147.

FROM DR. BLACKLOCK.

Edinburgh, Aug. 24, 1789.

DEAR BURNS, thou brother of my heart,
 Both for thy virtues and thy art;
 If art it may be call'd in thee,
 Which Nature's bounty, large and free,
 With pleasure on thy breast diffuses,
 And warms thy soul with all the Muses,
 Whether to laugh with easy grace,
 Thy numbers move the sage's face,
 Or bid the softer passion rise,
 And ruthless souls with grief surprise—
 'Tis Nature's voice distinctly felt,
 Through thee her organ, thus to melt.

Most anxiously I wish to know,
 With thee of late how matters go;
 How keeps thy much-lov'd Jean her health?
 What promises thy farm of wealth?
 Whether the Muse pervious to smile,
 And all thy anxious cares beguile?
 Whether bright fancy keeps alive?
 And how thy darling infants thrive?

For me, with grief and sickness spent,
 Since I my journey homeward bent,
 Spirits depress'd no more I mourn,
 But vigour, life, and health return.
 No more to gloomy thoughts a prey,
 I sleep all night, and live all day;
 By turns my book and friend enjoy,
 And thus my circling hours employ!
 Happy, while yet these hours remain,
 If Burns could join the cheerful train,
 With wonted zeal, sincere and fervent,
 Salute once more his humble servant.

THOS. BLACKLOCK.

IV.

For you, na bred to barn or byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line—

See p. 153.

FROM MRS. SCOTT,

OF WAUCHOP-BOURIE.

February, 1757.

My canty, winy, rhyming ploughman,
I haillin doubt it is na true, man,
That ye between the mills were bred,
Wi' ploughmen school'd, wi' ploughmen fed.
I doubt it mair, ye've drawn your knowledge
Either frae grammar-school, or college.
Gude troth, your soul and body baith
Ware bester fed, I'd gie my aith,
Then theirs, wha up-cour-milk and parrich,
And bummil through the Single Carrioch.
Whae'er heard the ploughman speak,
Could tell gif Homer was a Greek?
He'd flee as soon upon a cudgel,
As get a single line o' Virgil.
And then we dee ye crack your jokes
On Willie Pitt and Charlie Fox:
Our great men a' we weel describe,
And how to get the nation thrive;
Ane mair we swear ye dwell among them,
And as ye saw them, we ye sang them.

But, be ye ploughman, be ye peat,
Ye are a funny blade, I swear;
And though the cauld I ill can bide,
Yet twenty miles, and mair, I'd ride,
Ower moss and mair, and never grumble,
Though my auld yod should gie a stumble,
To crack a winter-night wi' thee,
And hear thy sangs and sonnets dee.
A gude wau-berring and a cake,
Wi' sic a chiel, a feast wad make.
I'd rather scour your reaming yill,
Or eat o' cheese and bread my fill,
Than wi' dull lairds on turtie dine,
And ferlie at their wit and wine.

O, gif I ken'd but where ye baid,
I'd send to you a marked plaid;
'Twad band your shoulders warm and braw,
And douse at kirk or market thaw.
For south, as weel as north, my lad,
A' honest Scotchmen lo'e the maid.
Right was that we're we far frae inhere:
Yet proud I am to ca' ye brother.

Your most obedient,

E. SCOTT.

V.

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my
mother lived a while in her girlish years;
the good old man, for such he was, was
long blind ere he died, during which time,
his highest enjoyment was to sit down and
cry, while my mother would sing the
simple old song of "The Life and Age of
Man."

See p. 273.

THE

AGE AND LIFE OF MAN:

A short Description of the Nature, Rise,
and Fall, according to the Twelve
months of the Year.

TRUST—Isle of Kell.

I.

Uron the sixteenth hundred year
Of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testify;
On January, the sixteenth day,
As I did ly alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah! man is made to mean.

II.

DAME NATURE, that instructive guide,
Did stand up me before;
And said to me, you must provide
This life for to abhor:
Thou sees what things are gone before,
Experience teacheth thee,
In whatsoever state thou be,
Remember, man, to die.

III.

Of all the treasures bearing life,
Recal back to thy mind;
Consider how they ebb and flow,
Each thing in their own kind;
Yet few of them have such a strain,
As God hath given to thee;
Therefore this lesson keep in mind—
Remember, man, to die.

IV.

Man's course on earth, I will report,
If I have time and space;
It may be long, it may be short,
As God hath giv'n him grace.
His nature to the herbs compare,
That in the ground ly dead;
And to each month add five year,
And so we will proceed.

V.

The first five years then of man's life,
Compare to Januar;
Is all that time but storm and strife,
He can but greet and roar;
So in the fields of flowers all bare,
By reason of the frost:
Keeping the ground both soft and sound,
Yet none of them is lost.

VI.

So to years ten I shall speak then
Of Februar but lack;
The child is meek and weak of sp'rit,
Nothing can undertake.
So all the flowers, for lack of showers,
No springing up can make,
Yet birds do sing and praise their King,
And each one choose their mate.

VII.

Then in comes March, that noble arch,
With wholesome spring and air,
The child doth spring to years fifteen,
With visage fine and fair;
So do the flow'rs, with softening showers,
Aye spring up as we see;
Yet, nevertheless, remember this,
That one day we must die.

VIII.

Then brave April doth sweetly smile,
The flowers do fair appear,
The child is then become a man,
To the age of twenty year.
If he be kind and well inclin'd,
And brought up at the school,
Then men may know if he foreshow,
A wise man or a fool.

IX.

Then cometh May, gallant and gay,
When fragrant flow'rs do thrive,
The child is then become a man,
Of age twenty and five.

And for his life doth seek a wife,
His days and years to spend;
May He above send peace and love,
And grace unto the end!

X.

Then cometh June, with pleasant time,
When fields with flow'rs are clad,
And Phoebus bright is at his height,
All creatures then are glad.
Then he appears of thirty years,
With courage bold and stout;
His nature so makes him to go,
Of death he hath no doubt.

XI.

Then July comes with his hot calms,
And constant in his kind;
The man doth thrive to thirty-five,
And sober grows his mind;
His children small do on him call,
And breed him storm and strife;
His wife may die, and so must he
Go seek another wife.*

XII.

Then August old, both stout and bold,
When flow'rs do stoutly stand;
So man appears at forty years,
With wisdom and command;
And doth provide his house to guide,
Children and familie;
Yet do not miss to remember this,
That one day thou must die.

XIII.

September then comes with his rain,
And makes the flowers to fade;
Then man belyes is forty-five,
Grave, constant, wise, and mild;
When he looks on, how youth is gone,
And shall it no more see;
Then may he say, both night and day,
Have mercy, Lord, on me!

XIV.

October's blast comes in with boan,
And makes the flow'rs to fall;
Then man appears at fifty years,
Old age doth on him call;
The almond-tree doth flourish here,
And pale grows man we see;
Then it is time to use this line,
Remember, man, to die.

* The two last lines of this stanza are
omitted by Mr. Cromek.

XV.

November air maketh fields bare,
Of flowers, of grass, and corn,
Then man arrives to fifty-five,
And sick both e'en and morn;
Loins, legs, and thighs, with sad disease,
Makes him to sigh and say,
Ah! Heaven on high have mind on me,
And learn me how to die.

XVI.

December fall, balch sharp and snell,
Makes flowers creep in the ground;
Then man's threescore, both sick and sore,
No soundness in him found.
His ears and een, and teeth of bane,
All these now to him fail;
Then he may say, both night and day,
That death shall him assail.

XVII.

And if there be through nature strong,
Some that live ten years more;
Or if he creepath up and down,
Till he comes to fourscore;
Yet all this time is but a liss,
No pleasure can he see;
Then he may say, both night and day,
Have mercy, Lord, on me!

XVIII.

Thus have I shown you as I can,
The course of all men's life;
We will return where we began,
But either man or wife,
Dams Maesons doth take her leave,
She'll last no more, we see;
O grant that I may not Him grieve
To think no more of me.

It appears from the first verse of this poem, that it was written in 1823. It is no bad specimen of the quaint, moralizing manner that obtained soon after the reformation. The text is given from an old printed copy in the possession of the present Editor. It differs in a few verbalities from that published by Mr. Cromek. It will be perceived that Burns had it in his eye when he composed his beautiful ode—"Man was made to mourn."

VI.

DONNOCHT HEAD.

A FRAGMENT.

Donnoch Head is not mine; I would give
ten pounds it were.

See p. 412.

I.

Kees blows the wind o'er Donnochs-head,*
The snow drives usel through the dale;
The Gaberlunzie tirls my neck,
And, shivering, tells his waeft' tale:
"Could it be the night, O let me in,
And dinna let your minnrel fa';
And dinna let his windin'-sheet
Be naething but a wreath o' snow.

II.

"Full ninety winters hae I seen,
And plp'd where gos-cocks whirring flew;
And monie a day I've danc'd, I woen,
To lils which from my drone I blew,"
My Eppie waked, and soon she cry'd,
"Get up, gudeman, and let him in;
For weel ye ken the winter night
Was short when he began his din."

III.

My Eppie's voice, O woe it's sweet,
Even though she bans and scoulds a-wee;
But when it's tun'd to sorrow's tale,
O, balch, it's doubly dear to me!
"Come in, cold carl, I'll steer my fire,
I'll make it bleeze a bonnie flame;
Your blade is thin, you've tane the gate,
Ye should na stray sae far frae hame."

IV.

"Nae hame hae I," the minnrel said,
"Sad party wife o'erturn'd my ha';
And, weeping at the eve of life,
I wander through a wreath o' snow."

* A mountain in the north.

VII.

MY JO, JANET.

"Johnson, the publisher," with a foolish delicacy," says Burns, "refused to insert the last stanza of this ballad." It may gratify the curiosity of the reader to compare the original with that composed by Burns for Mr. Thomson.—See p. 417.

TUNE—My jo, Janet.

SHE.

SWEET Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye come by the Bann, then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a kekking-glass then.

HE.

Keek into the draw-well,
Janet, Janet;
And there ye'll see your bonnie sel,
My jo, Janet.

SHE.

Keeking in the draw-well clear,
Whas if I should fa' in?
Sync a' my kin will say and swear,
I drown'd mysel for ain.

HE.

Hand the better by the brace,
Janet, Janet;
Hand the better by the brace,
My jo, Janet.

SHE.

Good Sir, for your courtesie,
Coming through Aberdeen, then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a pair of shoon, then.

HE.

Clout the auld, the new are dear,
Janet, Janet;
Ae pair may gain ye half a year,
My jo, Janet.

* Of "The Scots Musical Museum."

SHE.

But whas if dancing on the green,
And skipping like a maskin,
If they should see my clouted shoon,
Of me they will be makin.

HE.

Dance aye laigh, and late at e'en,
Janet, Janet;
Sync a' their faunts will no be seen,
My jo, Janet.

SHE.

Kind Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye gae to the Cron, then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a pacing-horse, then.

HE.

Face upo' your spinning-wheel,
Janet, Janet;
Face upo' your spinning-wheel,
My jo, Janet.

SHE.

My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, Sir;
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Employs aft my hand, Sir.

HE.

Mak the best o't that ye can,
Janet, Janet;
But like it never wale a man,
My jo, Janet.

VIII.

THE STOOL OF REPENTANCE.

Linlithgow A peeny good old Gothic church; the infamous Stool of Repentance in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation.

See p. 445.

This stool, which merits a more severe epithet than Burns has bestowed on it, was fashioned like an arm-chair, and raised on a pedestal, nearly two feet higher than the other seats, directly fronting the pulpit. When the kirk-bell

was rung, the culprit ascended, and the bellman arrayed him in the sackcloth of fornication. Here he did penance, during divine service, for three Sundays successively. The woman was compelled to appear in the same habiliment,

"A fixed figure for the hand of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at."

The cognizance of illicit connection was, throughout all Europe, a province which the clergy assumed to themselves; and the kirk of Scotland, which at the Reformation renounced so many powers and privileges, took this crime under her more especial jurisdiction. The punishment of the Stool, though a relic of "the scarlet whore," was in consequence retained;* and it was inflicted, not only on transgressors who made no other atonement, but also on those who healed the breach of chastity by subsequent marriage. So scrupulous was the kirk in this respect, that the bridegroom had to deposit *six pounds Scots*, in the custody of the session, as a pledge that he had not yet enjoyed the privileges of a husband, which, if convicted, he forfeited. This impost was termed by the peasantry, in allusion to the border taxes, "Buttock mail." The rigour of these penalties, however, has of late years been relaxed; and in many places they have been commuted for small fines, and private admonition. Let us indulge a hope, that the liberal spirit of the present age will continue to prevail over the narrow bigotry of fanaticism, and consign to the oblivion it merits, every ecclesiastical censure which tends to freeze the charities of the heart, and substitute hypocrisy for sincere repentance.

* The reply of an old woman to John Knox, deserves to be recorded. "I have plucked the raiment from the harlot!" exclaimed the barbarian. "Ah! na, na," said the good dame, pointing to "the seat of shame," "ye has kept the very tassel o' the breeks o' Popery."

IX.

A great number of Poems have been written on the death of Burns. We select one only on this melancholy subject. It is from the pen of the Biographer of "Lorenzo de' Medici."

ON THE DEATH OF BURNS.

BY MR. ROSCOE.

I.

REAR high thy bleak, majestic hills,
Thy shepherd valleys proudly spread;
And, SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But, ah! what poet now shall tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he the sweetest bard is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain?

II.

As green thy towering pines may grow,
As clear thy streams may speed along,
As bright thy summer suns may glow,
As gaily charm thy feather'd throng;
But now, unherded in the song,
And dull and lifeless all around,
For his wild harp lies all unstrung,
And cold the hand that wak'd its sound.

III.

What though thy vigorous offspring rise,
In arms, in arms, thy sons excel;
Though beauty in thy daughters' eyes,
And health in every feature dwell;
Yet who shall now their praises tell,
In strains impassion'd, fond and true,
Since he no more the song shall swell
To love, and liberty, and thee.

IV.

With step-dame eye and frown severe,
His hapless youth why didst thou view?
For all thy joys to him were dear,
And all his vows to thee were due:
No greater bliss his bosom knew,
In opening youth's delightful prime,
Than when thy favouring ear he drew
To listen to his charmed rhyme.

V.

Thy lonely wastes and frowning skies
To him were all with rapture fraught;
He heard with joy the tempest rise
That wak'd him to sublimer thought;
And oft thy winding bells he sought,
Where wild flow'rs pour'd their subtle
perfume;
And with sincere devotion brought
To thee the summer's earliest bloom.

VI.

But, ah! no fond maternal smile
His unprotected youth enjoyed;
His limbs inur'd to early toil,
His days with early hardships tried;
And more to mark the gloomy void,
And bid him feel his misery,
Before his infant eyes would glide
Day-dreams of immortality.

VII.

Yet, not by cold neglect depress'd,
With sinewy arm he turn'd the soil,
Sunk with the evening sun to rest,
And met at morn his earliest smile.
Wak'd by his rustic pipe, meanwhile
The powers of Fancy came along,
And nook'd his lengthen'd hours of toil
With native wit and sprightly song.

VIII.

Ah! days of bliss, too swiftly fled,
When vigorous Health from labour springs,
And bland Contentment smooths the bed,
And Sleep his ready opiate brings:
And hovering round on airy wings
Float the light forms of young Desire,
That of unutterable things
The soft and shadowy Hope inspires.

IX.

Now spells of mightier power prepare,
Bid brighter phantoms round him dance;
Let Flattery spread her viewless snare,
And Fame attract his vagrant glance;
Let sprightly Pleasure too advance,
Unveil'd her eyes, unclasp'd her zone,
Till, lost in Love's delicious trance,
He scorn the joys his youth has known.

X.

Let Friendship pour her brightest blaze,
Expanding all the bloom of soul;
And Mirth concentrate all her rays,
And point them from the sparkling bowl;

And let the careless moments roll
In social pleasures uncount'd,
And Confidence, that spurns control,
Unlock the inmost springs of mind:

XI.

And lead his steps those towers among,
Where elegance with splendour vies,
Or Science bids her favour'd throng,
To more refin'd sensations rise:
Beyond the peasant's humble joys,
And freed from each laborious strife,
There let him learn the bliss to prize,
That wait the sons of polish'd life.

XII.

Then, whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night;
And let Despair, with wizard light,
Disclose the yawning gulf below,
And pour incantant on his sight
Her specter'd hills and shapes of woe:

XIII.

And show beneath a cheerless shed,
With sorrowing heart and streaming eyes,
In silent grief where droops her head,
The partner of his early joys;
And let his infant's tender cries
His fond parental succour claim,
And bid him hear in agonies
A husband's and a father's name.

XIV.

'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds;
His high, reluctant spirit bends;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends.
An idiot laugh the welkin reads
As genius thus degraded lies;
Till playing Heaven the veil extends
That shrouds the Poet's ardent eyes.

XV.

Rear high thy bleak, majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread;
And, Scotia, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red.
But never more shall poet tread
Thy airy brights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain.

GLOSSARY.

THE *ch* and *gh* have always the guttural sound. The sound of the English diphthong *oo*, is commonly spelled *ou*. The French *u*, a sound which often occurs in the Scottish language, is marked *oo*, or *ui*. The *a*, in genuine Scottish words, except when forming a diphthong, or followed by an *e* mute after a single consonant, sounds generally like the broad English *a* in *wall*. The Scottish diphthong *ae*, always, and *ea* very often, sound like the French *e* masculine. The Scottish diphthong *ey*, sounds like the Latin *ei*.

GLOSSARY.

A.

A', all,
 Aback, away, aloof
 Abeligh, at a shy distance
 Aboon, above, up
 Ahead, abroad, in sight
 Abreed, in breadth
 Ae, one
 Aft, off, *aff-loof*, unpremeditated
 Aft, oft; after, often,
 A-gley, off the right line, wrong
 Aibline, perhaps
 Aik, an oak
 Ain, own
 Air, early, soon
 Airl-penny, earnest-money
 Airm, iron
 Airt, quarter of the heavens; to direct
 Aith, an oath
 Aits, oats
 Alver, an old horse
 Aizle, a hot clader
 Alake! alas!
 Alane, alone
 Amaist, almost
 Among, among
 An, if
 An', and
 Ance, once
 Anc, one, an
 Anent, over against, concerning
 Anither, another
 Ast, ashes
 Ascent, asquint, askant
 Asteer, abroad, stirring
 Aught, eight; possession, as, in *a' my*
 aught, in all my possession

Auld, old

Auld farran, or auld farrant, sagacious,
 cunning, prudent
 Auld lang syne, olden time, days of other
 years
 Aumos-dish, a vessel in which money is
 collected at church for the relief of
 the poor
 Auntie, an aunt
 Ava', at all
 Ava', away
 Awn, the beard of barley, oats, &c.;
 awnie, bearded
 Ayont, beyond

B.

Ba', ball
 Backet, a kind of wooden box for holding
 salt
 Backlin comin, coming back, returning
 Bade, did bid, endured, did stay
 Balde, dwelt
 Bailie, a magistrate in Scotland, answer-
 ing to an alderman in England
 Baggie, dimin. of bag, a familiar term
 used to signify the belly
 Baine, having large bones, strong
 Bairn, a child
 Bairntime, the period in which a woman
 bears children
 Baith, both
 Bake, a small cake or biscuit
 Ban, to curse, to swear
 Bane, bone
 Bang, to beat, to strive
 Bardie, dimin. of Bard

- Bareft, barefoot
 Barley-bree, the juice of malt of what-
 ever kind, as spirits, porter, &c.
 Barmie, of or like barm or yeast
 Batch, a crew, a gang
 Bats, bots
 Baudrons, a cat
 Bauk, a cross beam; bauken', the end of
 a beam
 Bauld, bold
 Hawk, a scrip of land left unploughed,
 two or three feet in width; a ridge,
 a bank
 Baws'nt, having a white stripe down the
 face
 Bawtie, a name given to a dog
 Bear, barley
 Beastie, dimin. of beast
 Beet, to add fuel to fire
 Beld, bald
 Belyve, by and by
 Ben, into the spence or parlour
 Beamost, innermost
 Bethankit, the grace after meals
 Beuk, a book
 Bicker, a kind of wooden dish, a short
 race
 Biel, or bield, shelter
 Bies, wealthy, plentiful
 Bigg, to build; biggit, built; biggin, build-
 ing, a house
 Bill, a bull
 Billy, a brother, a young fellow
 Bing, a heap of grain, potatoes, &c.
 Birk, birch
 Birken-shaw, a small wood of birch trees
 Birkie, a smart fellow
 Birring, the noise of partridges, &c. when
 they spring
 Brees, bristles
 Bit, crisis, sick of time
 Bizz, a bustle; to buzz
 Blastic, a shrivelled dwarf, a term of con-
 tempt
 Blastit, blasted
 Bate, bashful, sheepish
 Blather, bladder
 Bland, a flat piece of any thing; to slap
 Blaw, to blow, to boast
 Bleerit, bleared, sore with rheum
 Bleert and blin, bleared and blind
 Bleezing, blazing
 Bieham, an idle taking fellow
 Biecher, nonsense; to talk idly
 Blink, a little while, a smiling look; to
 look kindly, to shine by fits
 Blinker, a term of contempt
 Blinkie, smirking
 Blade, blood
 Blue-gown, one of those beggars who get
 annually, on the king's birth-day, a
 a blue cloak or gown, with a badge
 Blustie, a stupid person, one without
 spirit
 Blype, a shred, a large piece
 Bob, a person in the act of dancing, is
 said to bob
 Bock, to vomit, to gush intermittently
 Bodle, a small old Scottish coin, one-
 sixth of a penny English
 Boglee, spirits, hobgoblins
 Bonnie, or bonny, handsome, beautiful
 Bonnock, a kind of thick cake of bread, a
 small jannack or loaf made of oat-meal
 Boord, a board
 Boortree, the shrub elder, planted much
 of old in hedges of barn-yards, &c.
 Boost, behaved, must needs
 Bore, a hole in the wall
 Botch, an angry tumour
 Bouk, Bulk, a body
 Bow-kall, cabbage
 Bow't, bended, crooked
 Bowster, bolster
 Brae, a declivity, a precipice, the slope
 of a hill
 Braid, broad
 Braladge, to reel forward
 Brainsdg't, reeled forward
 Braik, a kind of harrow
 Brak, broke, made insolvent
 Branks, a kind of wooden curb for horses
 Brash, a sudden illness
 Brats, coarse clothes, rags, &c.
 Brattle, a short race, hurry, fury
 Braw, fine, handsome
 Brawly, or brawlie, very well, daintily,
 heartily

Braxie, a morbid sheep
 Breastle, dimin. of breast
 Breastit, did spring up or forward
 Breckan, fern
 Bree, or bris, juice, liquid
 Breef, an invulnerable or irresistible spell
 Brecks, breeches
 Breat, smooth
 Brig, a bridge
 Brunstane, brimstone
 Brisket, the breast, the bosom
 Brither, a brother
 Brock, a badger
 Brogue, a hum, a trick
 Broo, broth, liquid, water
 Broose, a race at country weddings, who shall first reach the bridegroom's house on returning from church
 Brose, a dish made by pouring boiling water on oatmeal and stirring it
 Brucket, having a dark complexion
 Brugh, a burgh
 Bruilzie, a broil, a combustion
 Brunt, did burn, burnt
 Brust, to burst, burst
 Buchan-bullers, the boiling of the sea among the rocks on the coast of Buchan
 Buckskin, an inhabitant of Virginia
 Bught, a pen
 Bughtin-time, the time of collecting the sheep in the pens to be milked
 Buidly, stout made, broad made
 Bum-clock, a humming beetle that flies in the summer evenings
 Humming, humming as bees
 Bummie, to blunder
 Bummer, a blunderer
 Bunker, a window-seat
 Burdies, dimin. of birds
 Bure, did bear
 Burn, water, a rivulet
 Burnswin, i. e. burn the wind, a blacksmith
 Burnie, dimin. of burn
 Buskie, bushy
 Basket, dressed
 Busks, dresses
 Busle, a bustle; to bustle

Bus, shelter
 But, except, without
 But an' ben, the country kitchen and parlour
 By himsel, lunatic, distracted
 Byke, a swarm, a nest of bees, a crowd
 Byre, a cow's stable

C.

Ca', to call, to name, to drive, to calve
 Cadger, a carrier
 Caddie, or caddie, literally a ticket-porter, or trusty person employed on errands; but the appellation is more frequently applied to other persons
 Caff, chaff
 Caird, a tinker
 Cairn, a loose heap of stones
 Calf-ward, a small enclosure for calves
 Callan, a boy
 Caller, fresh, sound, refreshing
 Callet, a trull
 Cannie, gentle, mild, dexterous
 Canple, or canny, cheerful, merry
 Cantrap, a charm, a spell
 Caprin, exasper, skipping merrily
 Cap-stane, cope-stone, key-stone
 Careerin, cheerfully
 Carl, an old man
 Carl-hemp, the largest stalk of hemp
 Carlin, a stout old woman
 Carrich, the Shorter Catechism
 Carter, cards
 Caudron, a cauldron
 Cauk, chalk
 Cauld, cold
 Caup, a wooden drinking vessel
 Cawie, a coop or pen for poultry
 Cesses, assessments, taxes
 Chap, a person, a fellow, a blow
 Chaup, a stroke, a blow
 Chaater, a part of a bagpipe
 Cheek-for-chow, cheek-for-joke
 Cheekit, checked
 Cheep, a chirp; to chirp
 Chiel, a fellow, a person, a young man
 Chimla, or chimlie, a fire-grate, a fire-place

- Chimla-lug, the fire-side
 Chittering, shivering, trembling
 Chockin, choking
 Chow, to chew
 Chuffie, fat-faced
 Clachan, a small village about a church, a hamlet
 Claise, or clais, clothes
 Clalth, cloth
 Clavers, or clavers, idle stories, nonsense
 Clap, clapper of a mill
 Clarkit, wrote
 Clash, an idle tale, the story of the day
 Clatter, an idle story; to tell little idle stories
 Claught, snatched at, laid hold of
 Claut, to clean, to scrape; a heap, a great quantity
 Claver, clover
 Claw, to scratch
 Claymore, a sort of broad sword, used antiently by the Scottish Highlanders
 Cleed, to clothe
 Cleeds, clothes
 Cleek, to lay hold of, as with a hook
 Clinkin, clinking, jerking
 Clinkumbell, he who rings the church-bell
 Clips, shears
 Clishmaclaver, idle conversation
 Clock, to hatch; a bottle
 Clockin-time, hatching-time
 Cloot, the hoof of a cow, sheep, &c.
 Clootie, an old name for the devil
 Clour, a bump or swelling after a blow
 Clout, to beat, to strike, to mend; a blow, a cuff
 Clude, clouds
 Clunk, to gurgie in the manner of a bottle when it is emptying
 Coble, a fishing-boat
 Cockernosey, a lock of hair tied upon a girl's head, a cap
 Cod, a pillow
 Coft, bought
 Cog, a wooden dish
 Coggie, dimin. of cog
 Coila, from Kyle, a district of Ayrshire; so called, saith tradition, from Coll, or Collus, a Pictish monarch
 Collie, a general, and sometimes a particular, name for country curs
 Collichangie, a quarrel, an uproar
 Cood, the cud
 Coof, a blockhead, a ninny
 Cookit, appeared and disappeared by fits
 Cooser, a stallion, a libertine
 Coost, did cast
 Coot, the ankle bone
 Cootie, a wooden kitchen dish, a fowl whose legs are feathered
 Corbie, a species of the crow
 Core, corps, party, clan
 Corn't, fed with oats
 Cotter, the inhabitant of a cot-house or cottage
 Couthie, kind, loving
 Cove, a cave
 Cowe, to terrify, to keep under, to lop; a fright, a branch of furze, broom, &c.
 Cowp, to harter, to tumble over; a gang
 Cowrin, cowering
 Cowts, a colt
 Cozie, snug
 Crabbit, crabbed, fretful
 Crack, to converse; conversation
 Craft, or croft, a field near a house
 Craigie, dimin. of craig, the throat
 Craiks, cries or calls incessantly, a bird
 Crambo-clink, or crambo-jingle, a play at which one gives a word, and another finds a rhyme; doggrel verses
 Crank, the noise of an ungreased wheel
 Crankous, fretful, captious
 Cranreuch, the hoar frost
 Crap, a crop; to crop
 Craw, crow of a cock, a rook
 Creel, a basket; *to have one's wits in a creel*, to be fascinated, to be crazed
 Creeshie, greasy
 Crocks, old ewes that have given over bearing
 Cronie, an intimate acquaintance
 Crood, or crood, to coo as a dove
 Croon, a hollow and continued moan; to make a noise like the continued roar of a bull, to hum a tune
 Crouchie, crook-backed
 Crouse, cheerful, courageous

Crowdie, a composition of oatmeal and boiled water, sometimes from the broth of beef, mutton, &c.

Crowdie-time, breakfast-time

Crowlin, crawling, creeping

Crummock, a cow with crooked horns

Crump, hard and brittle, spoken of bread

Crunt, a blow on the head with a cudgel

Culf, a blockhead, a stony

Cummock, a short staff with a crooked head

Curchie, a curtsy, the reverence made by women

Curier, a player at a game on the ice, practised in Scotland, called *curling*

Curle, curled, one whose hair falls naturally in ringlets

Curmurring, murmuring, a slight rumbling noise

Curpin, or curpie, the crupper, that part of the horseman's furniture that reaches from the saddle to the tail, the reins

Cushat, the dove or wood-pigeon

Cutty, short; a spoon broken in the middle of the handle; a light woman

Cutty-stool, a stool on which sinners are placed when making atonement in the church for having committed fornication

D.

Dacent, stupid

Daffie, merriment, foolishness

Daft, merry, giddy, foolish

Dalmen, rare, now and then; *dalmen-icker*, an ear of corn now and then

Dalsty, pleasant, good-humoured, agreeable

Davieily, worn with fatigue

Dales, plains, valleys

Danton, to intimidate, to subdue

Dam, urine, piddle

Darkline, darkling

Daud, to thrash, to abuse

Deur, to dare, to defy

Darg, a day's labour

Davock, dimin. of David

Dawd, a large piece

Dawit, or dautet, fondled, caressed

Dean of Faculty, the president of the Faculty of Advocates

Dearies, dimin. of dears

Dearthfu', dear

Deave, to deafen

Deil-ma-care! no matter! for all that!

Deleerit, delicious

Describe, to describe

Diddle, to shake, to jog

Dight, to wipe, to clean corn from chaff

Dights, cleans

Din, swallow

Ding, to worst, to push

Dianna, do not

Dirl, a slight tremulous stroke or pain

Dixzen, a dozen

Doitot, stupidified, hebeted

Donsie, unlucky

Dool, sorrow; *to sing dool*, to lament, to mourn

Doos, doves

Dorty, mazy, nice, discontented

Douce, or *douet*, sober, wise, prudent

Dought, was or were able

Doup, the backside

Doup-skipper, one who strikes the tail

Deur, sullen, obstinate; *deur and die*, sullen and sallow

Deurt, stout, durable

Dow, am or are able, can

Dowff, pithless, wantling spirit

Dowie, worn with grief, fatigue, &c. half-asleep

Downa, am or are not able, cannot

Doyli, stupid

Drap, a drop; to drop

Draunting, drawing

Dreep, to drop, to cease

Dreigh, tedious, long about it

Dribble, drizzling, daver

Driddie, to be insignificantly diligent

Drift, a drove, usually of sheep; the driving snow, hail, or rain

Droddum, the breech

Droze, part of a bag-pipe

Droop-ramp't, that droops at the crupper

Drookit, drenched, wet

Drouth, thirst, drought
 Drumly, muddy
 Drummock, meal and water mixed raw
 Drunt, pet, sour humour
 Dub, a small pond
 Duds, rags, clothes
 Daddie, ragged
 Dung, worsted, pushed, driven, exhausted
 Dunted, beaten, boxed
 Dush, to push as a ram, &c.
 Dyver, a bankrupt

E.

E'e, the eye
 Een the eyes
 E'e-brie, the eye-brow
 E'enin, evening
 Eerie, frightened, dreading spirits
 Eild, old age
 Elbuck, the elbow
 El'er, elder, a layman introduced into the
 kirk polity
 Eldritch, ghastly, frightful
 En', end
 Enough, enough
 Ettle, to try, to attempt
 Eydent, diligent

F.

Fa', fall, lot; to fall
 Fa's, does fall; water-falls
 Faddom't, fathomed
 Fac, a foe
 Faem, foam
 Falket, unknown, unemployed
 Fairin, a present at fair-time
 Fallow, fellow
 Fand, old food
 Farl, a cake of bread
 Fash, trouble, care; to trouble, to care
 for
 Fashious, troublesome
 Fastern-a'en, Fastens-even
 Fault, a fold; to fold
 Fawsoot, decent, seemly
 Feal, a field; smooth
 Feal, seat, spruce

Fecht, to fight; a struggle of whatever
 kind
 Feck, many, plenty
 Focket, a waistcoat
 Feckfu', large, brawny, stout
 Feckless, puny, weak, silly
 Feckly, weakly
 Fegs, a petty oath
 Felde, feud, enmity
 Fell, keen, biting; the flesh immedi-
 ately under the skin; a field, pretty
 level, on the side or top of a hill
 Fen, successful struggle, fight
 Fend, to live comfortably
 Ferlie, or ferley, to wonder; a wonder, a
 term of contempt
 Fetch, to pull by fits
 Fey, a foe; *fy* men, enemies in war
 Fiel, soft, smooth
 Fient, fend, a petty oath
 Fier, sound, healthy; a brother, a friend
 Fisle, to make a rustling noise, to fidget;
 a bustle
 Fit, a foot
 Fizz, to make a hissing noise, like fer-
 mentation
 Flaflan, raising wind by motion, as birds
 do with their wings
 Flainen, or flannen, flannel
 Fleech, to supplicate in a flattering man-
 ner
 Fleesh, a fleece
 Fleg, a kick, a random blow
 Flether, to decoy by fair words
 Flewit, a smart blow
 Fley, to scare, to frighten
 Flichter, to flutter as young nestlings,
 when their dam approaches
 Flickering, to meet, to encounter
 Flinders, shreds, broken pieces
 Flingin-tree, a piece of timber hung by
 way of partition between two horses in
 a stable; a stall
 Flik, to fret at the yoke
 Flitter, to vibrate like the wings of small
 birds
 Flunkie, a servant in livery
 Foord, a ford
 Forebears, forefathers

Forbye, besides
 Forfaire, distressed, worn out, jaded
 Forfoughten, fatigued
 Forgather, to meet
 Forge, to forgive
 Forjesket, jaded with fatigue
 Fou, full, drunk
 Fother, fodder
 Foughten, troubled, harassed
 Fouth, plenty, enough
 Fow, a bushel, &c. a pitch-fork
 Frammit, strange, or estranged
 Froeth, froth
 Fad, the scut or tail of the hair, coney,
 &c.; the backside
 Fuff, to blow intermittently
 Fur, a furrow
 Fums, a form, a bench
 Fyke, trifling cares; to be in fuss about
 trifles, to piddle
 Fyle, to soil, to dirty

G.

Gab, the mouth; to speak boldly or
 pertly
 Gabertunzie, an old beggar
 Gadman, a ploughboy
 Gae, to go; gad, west; gane, gone;
 gaen, going
 Gait, or gate, way, manner, road
 Gang, to go, to walk
 Gangrel, strolling
 Gar, to force, to compel
 Garten, a garter
 Gash, wise, talkative; to converse
 Gaucy, jolly, large
 Gawk, half-witted, foolish, romping
 Gear, riches, goods of any kind
 Gock, to toss the head in wantonness or
 scorn
 Ged, a pike
 Gentles, great folks
 Genty, elegantly formed
 Geordie (yellow), a guinea
 Get, a child, a young one
 Ghaist, a ghost
 Gie, to give; gied, gave; gien, given
 Giftle, dimin. of gift

Giglets, playful girls
 Gilpey, a half-grown, half-informed boy
 or girl, a romping lad, a hoiden
 Gimmer, an ewe from one to two years
 old
 Gin, if, against
 Gipsy, a young girl
 Girdle, a round plate of iron for toasting
 cakes over the fire
 Gira, to grin, to twist the features in
 rage, agony, &c.
 Glizz, a periwig
 Glasket, inattentive, foolish
 Glaive, a sword
 Glazie, glittering, smooth, like a glass
 Glaum'd, aimed, snatched
 Gleg, sharp, ready
 Gieib, a globe
 Glen, dale, deep valley
 Gley, a-squint; to squint
 Glib-gabbit, that speaks smoothly and
 readily
 Glint, to peep
 Gloamin, the twilight; a *glaamin-abot*,
 a twilight-interview
 Glowr, to stare, to look; a stare, a look
 Goavan, walking stupidly, or awkwardly
 Gowan, the flower of the daisy, dande-
 lion, hawkweed, &c.
 Gowd, gold
 Gowff, the game of golf; to strike as
 the bat does the ball at golf
 Gowk, a cuckoo, a cuckold, a term of
 contempt
 Gowl, to howl
 Graff, a grave
 Grulp, a pronged instrument for cleaning
 stables
 Graith, furniture, accoutrements, dress
 Grase, or grala, a groin; to groan
 Granale, grandmother
 Grape, to grope
 Grat, wept, shed tears
 Great, intimate, familiar
 Gree, to agree; to bear the gree, to be
 decidedly victor
 Greet, to weep, to shed tears
 Grieve, an overcoat
 Grippet, caught, seized

Groat, to get the wobbles of one's great, to play a losing game
 Grousome, loathsomely grim
 Grozet, a gooseberry
 Grumph, a grunt; to grunt
 Grumple, a sow
 Grun', ground
 Grunstone, a grindstone
 Gruntle, the phiz, a grunting noise
 Grunzie, the mouth
 Grushie, thick, of thriving growth
 Grutzen, wept
 Gude, the Supreme Being; good
 Gudeman and gudewife, the master and mistress of the house; young *gudemans*, a man newly married
 Gullie, or gully, a large knife
 Gudravage, running in a confused, disorderly manner
 Gumlie, muddy, turbid
 Gumption, understanding, judgment
 Gusty, tasteful

H.

Ha', hail
 Hae, to have
 Haen, had, *the participle*
 Haet, *sent haet*, a petty oath of negation; nothing
 Haffet, the temple, the side of the head
 Haffins, nearly half, partly
 Hag, a scar or gulf in mosses or moors
 Haggis, a kind of pudding boiled in the stomach of a cow or sheep
 Hain, to spare, to save
 Haist, harvest
 Haith, a petty oath
 Halvers, nonsense
 Hale, whole, tight, healthy
 Hall, or hald, an abiding place
 Hallas, a particular partition wall in a cottage; a seat of turf at the outside
 Hallion, a tatterdemalion, a ragged fellow
 Hallowmas, Hallow-ewe, the gist of October
 Haly, holy
 Hame, home
 Has', or haun', hand

Hastle, a great many
 Hap, an outer garment, mantle, &c.; to wrap, to cover, to hap
 Happer, a hopper
 Happing, hopping
 Hap-step-an'-leap, hop-skip-and-leap
 Harkit, hearkened
 Harn, very coarse linen
 Har'st, harvest
 Hash, a fellow who neither knows how to dress nor act with propriety
 Haud, to hold
 Haughts, low-lying rich lands, valleys
 Haul, to drag, to peel
 Haverel, a half-witted person, half-witted
 Havins, good manners, decorum, good sense
 Hawkie, a cow, properly one with a white face
 Heal, health, in good health
 Healsome, healthsome, wholesome
 Heapit, heaped
 Hearse, hoarse
 Hear't, hear it
 Heather, heath
 Hech! oh! strange!
 Hecht, foretold, offered
 Heckle, a board, in which are fixed a number of sharp steel pins, used in dressing hemp, flax, &c.
 Hech-o'er-gowdie, topsy-turvy
 Heeze, to elevate, to raise
 Herrin, a herring
 Herry, to plunder, most properly to plunder bird's nests
 Herryment, plundering, devastation
 Het, hot
 Heugh, a crag, a coal-pit
 Heuk, a hook
 Hiech, to hobble', to halt
 Hiltie-skiltie, in rapid succession
 Hiney, honey
 Hirlie, to walk lamely or crazily
 Hiseel, so many cattle as one person can attend
 Histle, dry, barren
 Hitch, a loop, a knot
 Hixale, husy, a young girl
 Hoddie, humble; the motion of a sage

countryman riding on a cart-horse;
humble
Hog-score, a kind of distance-line, in
curling, drawn across the rink
Hog-shouter, a kind of horse-play, by
jostling with the shoulder; to jostle
Hool, outer-skin or case, a utahell,
grass-sward
Hookie! take leisure! stop!
Hoord, a hoard; to hoard
Horn, a spoon made of horn
Hornie, one of the many names of the devil
Host, or hoast, a cough; to cough
Hotch'd, turned topsy-turvy, blended,
mixed
Houghmagandie, fornication
Houp, hope
House, dimin. of house
Hove, to heave, to swell
Howdie, a midwife
Howe, hollow; a hollow or dell
Howe-backit, sunk in the back, spoken of
a horse, &c.
Howff, a place of resort
Howk, to dig
Howlet, or houlet, an owl
Hoy, to urge
Hoyse, a pull upwards
Hoyte, to amble crazily
Hunkers, the hams, or hinder parts of
the thighs
Hurdies, the loins, the crupper
Hushion, a cushion, stockings without
feet

I.

I', in
Ier-on, a great-grand-child
Ik or ika, each, every
Ill-wille, ill-natured, malicious, siggardly
Ingine, genius, legensity
Ingle, fire, fire-place
I've, I shall or will
Ither, other, one another

J.

Jad, jade
Jag, to prick, to pierce
Jauk, to dally, to trifle

Jap, a jerk of water; to splash
Jauntie, a short journey
Jaw, coarse raillery; to pour out, to shut,
to jerk as water
Jillet, a jilt, a giddy girl
Jimp, to jump; slender in the waist,
handsome
Jink, to turn a corner suddenly
Jo, a sweetheart
Jockleg, a kind of knife
Jouk, to stoop, to bow the head
Jow, to jow; a verb that includes both
the swinging motion and pealing
sound of a large bell
Jundie, to jumble

K.

Kae, a daw
Kail, colewort, a kind of broth
Kail-rust, the stem of colewort
Kain, fowls. &c. paid as rent by a farmer
Kehars, rafters
Kebuck, a cheese
Keek, a peep, to peep
Keel, red or black chalk
Ketpies, a sort of mischievous spirits,
said to haunt fords and ferries at night,
especially in storms
Ken, to know; kend, or ken't, knew
Kensin, a small matter
Kenspeckle, well-known
Ket, matted, hairy; a fleece of wool
Klaugh, carking anxiety
Kilhaigle, a well-known kind of whisky
Kilt, to tuck up the clothes
Kimmer, a young girl, a gossip
Kin', kind
King's-hood, a certain part of the en-
trails of an ox, &c.
Kintra, country
Kintra cooser, a country stallion
Kirk, the church
Kirs, the harvest supper, a chern
Kirsas, to christen or baptize
Kist, a chest, a shop-counter
Kitchen, any thing that is eaten with
bread, to serve for soup, gravy, &c.
Kith, kindred

Kittle, to tickle, ticklish, lively
 Kittlin, a young cat
 Kiuttle, to cuddle
 Knaggle, like knags or points of rocks
 Knappin-hammer, a hammer for break-
 ing stones
 Knowe, a small round hillock
 Knurl, a dwarf
 Kye, cows
 Kyte, the belly
 Kythe, to discover, to shew one's-self

L.

Laddie, dimin. of lad
 Laggen, the angle between the side and
 bottom of a wooden dish
 Laigh, low
 Lair, a place of repose
 Lairing, wading and sinking in snow,
 mud, &c.
 Laith, loath
 Laithfu', bashful, modest
 Lalland, a native of the lowlands of Scot-
 land
 Lallans, Scottish dialect
 Lambie, dimin. of lamb
 Lampit, a kind of shell-fish
 Lan', land, estate
 Lane, lone, *my lane, thy lane, &c.* my-
 self alone
 Lang, long; *to think lang, to long, to*
 weary
 Lap, did leap
 Lave, the rest, the others
 Laverock, the lark
 Lawin, the reckoning
 Lea, pasture ground
 Leal, loyal, true, faithful
 Lea-rig, a grassy ridge
 Lear, learning
 Lee-lang, live-long
 Leesome, pleasant
 Leeze me, a phrase of congratulation
 Leister, a three-pronged dart for striking
 fish
 Lough, did laugh
 Leuk, a look; to look

Libbet, gelded
 Licket, beaten
 Licks, pl. correction, a beating
 Lift, the sky
 Lightly, sneeringly; to sneer at
 Lilt, a ballad, a tune; to sing
 Limmer, a kept mistress, a strumpet
 Limp't, limped, hobbled
 Limpin, limping
 Link, to trip along
 Linn, a waterfall, a precipice
 Lint, flax; *lint is the bell, flax in the*
 flower
 Lintwhite, a linnet
 Lippen'd, put confidence in
 Loan, or loanin, the place of milking
 Loof, (pl. looves), the palm of the hand
 Loosome, lovely
 Loot, did let
 Loun, a fellow, a ragamuffin, a woman of
 easy virtue
 Loop, a leap; to leap
 Lowe, a flame; lowan, flaming, burning
 Lower, to loose
 Lug, the ear, a handle
 Lugget, having a handle
 Luggie, a small wooden dish with a
 handle
 Lum, the chimney
 Lunt, a column of smoke; to smoke
 Lyart, of a mixed colour, grey

M.

Mac, or mair, more
 Mang, among
 Mantle, a mantle
 Marked, variegated
 Mar's-year, the year 1713
 Mash, to mash, as malt, &c.
 Maist, most, almost
 Maillen, a farm
 Manse, the parsonage-house
 Mark, or merk, an ancient Scottish silver
 coin, in value thirteen pence three-
 farthings Sterling
 Mashlum, mixed corn
 Maskin-pot, a tea-pot
 Maukin, a hare

Maus, must
 Mavis, the thrush
 Maw, to mow
 Moort, a mare
 Melder, corn or grain of any kind, sent
 to the mill to be ground; a single
 grinding of meal
 Mell, a mallet; to meddle
 Melvic, to poll with meal
 Men', to mend
 Mense, good manners, decorum
 Menseless, ill-bred, rude, impudent
 Mewin, a small dog
 Midden, a small dunghill
 Midden-creeks, baskets for holding dung
 Midden-hole, a gutter at the bottom of a
 dunghill
 Midgee, grates
 Mim, prim, affectedly mock
 Min', mind, resemblance
 Mind't, mind it, resolved, intending
 Minnie, mother, dam
 Mirk, dark
 Miscra', to abuse, to call names
 Miscrea'd, unmannerly
 Mistook, mistook
 Mither, mother
 Mixtie-martie, confusedly mixed
 Moll, labour
 Monie, or mony, many
 Moop, to nibble as a sheep
 Moorlan', of or belonging to the moors
 Mou, the mouth
 Moodlewort, the mole
 Muck, dung
 Muckleg, cleansing from dung
 Muckle, or meikle, great, big, much
 Musle, dimin. of muse
 Muslin-kail, broth composed of water,
 barley, and greens
 Mutchkin, an English pint

N.

Na, no, not, nor
 Nae, no, not any
 Naething, nothing
 Nalg, a horse
 Nane, none

Nappy, ale; to be tipsy
 Natch, to lay hold of violently
 Neebor, a neighbour
 Negleckit, neglected
 Neuk, nook, corner
 Nlest, next in order or time
 Nieve, the fist
 Nievefu', a handful
 Niffer, an exchange; to barter
 Niger, a negro
 Nit, a sut
 Norland, of or belonging to the north
 Nowts, black cattle

O.

O', of
 O't, of it
 Onie, or ony, any
 Orra, superfluous
 Oughtline, in the least degree
 Ourie, shivering, drooping
 Outlers, cattle not housed
 Owre, over, too
 Owre-hip, a way of fetching a blow with
 the hammer over the arm

P.

Pack, intimate, familiar; twelve stone of
 wool
 Paidie, to paddle, to play in water
 Palnch, the paunch
 Paltrick, a partridge
 Pang, to cram
 Parle, speech
 Parritch, oatmeal pudding, a well-known
 Scotch dish
 Pat, did put; a pot
 Pattle, or pettle, a plough-staff
 Paughty, proud, haughty
 Pawkie, or pawkie, cunning, sly
 Pay't, paid, beat
 Peat, a piece of dried turf
 Peck, to fetch the breath short, as in an
 asthma
 Pechan, the crop, the stomach
 Peele, peeling
 Pettie, to cherish; a plough-staff

Philibegs, short petticoats worn by Highlandmen
 Phraise, fair speeches, flattery; to flatter, to wheedle
 Phraisa, flattery
 Fibroch, a Highland war-song adapted to the bag-pipe
 Pickle, a small quantity
 Pit, to put
 Placod, a public proclamation
 Plack, an old Scotch coin, the third part of a Scotch penny, twelve of which make an English penny
 Plackless, penniless, without money
 Plaid, an outer loose garment
 Plaiden, worsted cloth
 Pyle, a magpie
 Plough, a plough
 Pliskie, a trick, a mischief
 Pilver, a plover
 Pock, a bag, a small sack, a wallet
 Poind, to seize on cattle, or take the goods, as the laws of Scotland allow, for rent
 Poostith, poverty
 Pou, to pull
 Pouch, a pocket
 Pouk, to pluck
 Pouse, to push
 Pousie, a hare, a cat
 Pout, a poult, a chick
 Pou't, did pull
 Pouter, powder; pothery, like powder
 Pow, the head
 Pownie, a little horse
 Preen, a pin
 Prient, print
 Prie, to taste
 Prief, proof
 Frig, to cheapen
 Primie, demure, precise
 Propone, to lay down, to propose
 Provost (pl. provoses), the first magistrate of a royal borough, answering to lord mayor of England
 Pund, pound, pounds
 Pyke, to pick
 Pyle, a *pyle o' caff*, a single grain of chaff
 Plashy, full of water, splashy

Q.

Quak, to quake
 Quat, to quit, to give over
 Quey, a cow from one to two years old

R.

Ragweed, the herb ragwort
 Raible, to talk foolishly
 Rair, to roar
 Raize, to madden, to inflame
 Ram-fexi'd, fatigued, overexerted
 Ram-stam, thoughtless, forward
 Randie, turbulent, unsettled
 Rantin, merry, cheerful, jovial
 Raploch, properly a coarse cloth, but used as an adnoun for coarse
 Rash, a rush
 Rash-bush, a bush of rushes
 Ratan, a throb, a pulsation
 Rattlin, rattling
 Rattion, or rattan, a rat
 Raucle, rash, stout, fearless
 Raught, reached
 Raw, a row
 Rax, to stretch, to levy
 Ream, cream; to cream
 Reamin, brimful, frothing
 Reave, rove
 Reck, to breed
 Rede, counsel; to counsel
 Red-wat-shod, walking in blood over the shoe-tops
 Red-wud, stark mad
 Ree, half-drunk, fuddled
 Reek, smoke; to smoke
 Remead, remedy, alternative
 Restit, stood restive, stunted, withered
 Rew, repent
 Rief, rife, or reef, plenty
 Rief-rannies, sturdy beggars
 Rig, a ridge
 Rin, to run, to melt
 Rink, the course of the stones, a term in curling on ice
 Rinnin, running
 Rip, a handful of unthreshed corn
 Ripple, weakness in the back or loins

Riakit, made a noise like the tearing of roots

Rood, stands likewise for the plural roads

Rockin. See p. 52

Roos, a shred

Roose, to praise, to commend; applause

Roun', round

Rouper, or rough, hoarse as with a cold

Routhie, plentiful

Row, to roll, to wrap

Rowie, to low, to bellow

Rowth, or routh, plenty

Rozet, resin

Rung, a cudgel

Runkled, wrinkled

Runt, the stem of colewort or cabbage

Ruth, sorrow

Ryke, to reach, to stretch out the hand

S.

Sac, so

Soft, soft

Sair, to serve; sore

Sairie, poor, little

Sairty, or sairlike, sorely

Sair't, served

Sark, a shirt or shift

Sarkit, provided in shirts

Saugh, the willow

Saul, soul

Saumont, salmon

Saunt, saint

Saut, salt

Saw, to sow

Sax, viz

Scaith, or skaith, to injure; an injury

Scaud, to scald

Scauld, to scold

Scaur, apt to be scared

Scawl, a scold

Scome, a kind of bread

Sconner, to loathe; a loathing

Scouth, scope

Scralch, to scream as a hen, partridge, &c.

Scrood, to tear; a rent

Scrive, to glide swiftly along

Scrimp, to scant

Scroggle, thorny, briary

Second-sighted, possessed of the power of seeing things future or things distant

Sei, self; *a body's sei*, one's self alone

Sei't, did sell

Sen', to send

Session (the kirk), an inferior spiritual court of the church of Scotland, consisting of an assembly of elders, who sit in judgment, and pronounce sentence on Christian delinquents

Settlin, settling; *to get a settlin*, to be frightened into quietness

Sets, *set aff*, goes away

Shauchied, distorted, deformed

Shalrd, a shred

Shangan, a stick cleft at one end for putting the tail of a dog, &c. into, by way of mischief, or to frighten him away

Shave, a trick

Shaver, a humorous wag, a barber

Shaw, a small wood in a hollow place

Sheaver, a reaper

Shewn, bright, shining

Sheep-shank; *to think one's self near sheep-shank*, to be convicted

Shough, a ditch, a trench

Shiel, a shed

Shill, shrill

Shog, a shock, a push off at one side

Shood, a shovel

Shoon, shoes

Shore, to offer, to threaten

Shouter, the shoulder

Sic, such

Sicker, sure, steady

Sideline, sidelong, slanting

Siller, silver, money

Simmer, summer

Sin, a son

Sin', since

Sinsyne, since

Skellum, a worthless fellow

Skelp, to strike, to slap, to walk with a smart tripping step; a smart stroke.

Skelp-limmer, a technical term in female scolding

Skiegh, or skeigh, proud, nice, high-mettled

Skinklin, a small portion

- Skirl, to shriek, to cry shrilly
 Skieat, slant; *to run adanti*, to deviate from truth
 Skieated, ran, or hit in an oblique direction
 Skriegh, to scream; a scream
 Skyria, shining, glittering
 Skyte, force, violence
 Slide, did slide
 Slac, a shoe
 Slap, a gate, a breach in a fence
 Slaw, slow
 Slee, sly; sleest, slyest
 Sleekit, sleek, sly, cunning
 Sliderry, slippery
 Sloken, to quench, to slack thirst
 Slype, to fall over, as a wet furrow from the plough
 Sma', small
 Smeddum, dust, powder, mettle, sense
 Smiddy, a smithy
 Smoor, to smother
 Smootie, smutty, obscene, ugly
 Smytrie, a numerous collection of small individuals
 Snaking, the champing of a dog's teeth when aiming at his prey
 Snapper, stumble
 Snash, abuse, Billingagate
 Snaw, snow; to snow
 Snaw-broo, melted snow
 Snawie, snowy
 Snack, or snick, the latch of a door
 Snod, to lop, to cut off
 Snecshing, snuff
 Snecshie-mill, a snuff-box
 Snell, bitter, biting
 Snick-drawing, trick-contriving
 Snirtle, to laugh sneeringly
 Snood, a ribbon for binding the head, and tying up the hair
 Snool, one whose spirit is broken with oppressive slavery; to submit tamely, to snak, to oppress
 Snoove, to go smoothly and constantly, to snak
 Snork, to scent or snuff, as a dog, &c.
 Sonie, having sweet engaging looks, lucky, jolly
 Soom, to swim
 Sooth, truth, a petty oath
 Sough, a sigh, a sound dying on the ear
 Souple, swift, flexible
 Souter, a shoemaker
 Sowens, a dish made of the seeds of oatmeal soured, &c. boiled up to the consistence of a pudding
 Sowp, a spoonful, a small quantity of any thing liquid
 Sowth, to try over a tune with a low whistle
 Sowther, solder; to solder
 Spae, to prophesy, to divine
 Spaul, a limb
 Spairge, to dash, to soil, as with mire
 Spawie, the spavin
 Speat, or spate, a sweeping torrent, after rain or thaw
 Speel, to climb
 Speet, to spit, to thrust through
 Spence, the country parlour
 Spier, to ask, to inquire
 Splatter, a splutter; to splutter
 Spieuchan, a tobacco-pouch
 Splore, a frolic, a noise, a riot
 Sprattle, to scramble
 Spreckled, spotted, speckled, clambered
 Spring, a quick air in music, a Scotch reel
 Sprit, a tough-rooted plant, something like rushes
 Sprittie, full of sprits
 Spunk, a match, fire, mettle, wit
 Spunkie, mettlesome; Will-o'-wisp, or *igne fatuus*
 Spurtie, a stick used in making oatmeal-pudding, or porridge
 Squatter, to flutter in water, as a wild duck, &c.
 Squattle, to sprawl, to straggle
 Squeel, a scream, a screech; to scream
 Stacher, to stagger
 Stack, a rick of corn, hay, &c.
 Staggle, dimin. of stag
 Stalwart, strong, stout
 Stan', to stand; stan't, did stand
 Stane, stone
 Stang, sting

- Stank, did stink; a pool of standing water
- Stark, strong, powerful
- Startle, to run as cattle stung by the gad-fly
- Staumrel, a blockhead, half-witted
- Staw, did steal, to surfeit
- Stech, to cram the belly
- Stechas, cramming
- Stech, to shut; a stitch
- Steer, to molest, to stir
- Steeve, firm, compacted
- Stell, a still
- Sten, to rear as a horse
- Stents, tribute, dues of any kind
- Stey, steep; steyest, steepest
- Stibble, stubble; *stibble-rig*, the reaper in harvest who takes the lead
- Slick an' stow, totally, altogether
- Stilt, a crutch; to halt, to limp
- Slimpart, the eighth part of a Winchester bushel
- Stirk, a cow or bullock a year old
- Stock, a plant, or root of colewort, cabbage, &c.
- Stile, a gate in a fence
- Stook, a shock of corn
- Stockin, stocking; *throwing the stockin*, when the bride and bridegroom are put into bed, and the candle out, the former throws a stocking at random among the company, and the person whom it strikes is the next that will be married
- Stolter'd, staggered
- Stoor, sounding hollow, strong, and hoarse
- Stat, an ox
- Stoup, or stowp, a kind of jug with a handle, a spirit measure
- Stour, dust, more particularly dust in motion
- Stowline, by stealth
- Stown, stolen
- Stoyte, stumble
- Strack, did strike
- Straw, straw; *to die a fair straw death*, to die in bed
- Strait, did strike
- Straitet, stroked
- Strappan, tall and handsome
- Straight, straight
- Streck, stretched, to stretch
- Striddle, to straddle
- Stroan, to spout, to piss
- Strunt, spirituous liquor of any kind; to walk sturdily
- Studdie, an anvil
- Stumple, dimin. of stump
- Stuff, corn or pulse of any kind
- Sturt, trouble; to molest
- Sturtia, frightened
- Sucker, sugar
- Sugh, the continued rushing of wind or water
- Sumph, a stupid, sulken fellow
- Suthron, an old name for an Englishman
- Swaird, sword
- Swail'd, swelled
- Swank, stately, jolly
- Swankie, or swanker, a tight, strapping young fellow or girl
- Swap, an exchange; to barter
- Swarf, swoon
- Swat, did sweat
- Swatch, a sample
- Swats, drink, good ale
- Sweaten, sweating
- Sweer, lazy, averse; *dead-sweer*, extremely averse
- Swinge, to beat, to whip
- Swirl, a curve, an eddying blast or pool, a knot in wood
- Swirlie, knaggy, full of knots
- Swish! get away!
- Swither, to hesitate in choice; an irresolute wavering in choice
- Swour, swore, did swear
- Sybow, a young onion
- Sync, since, ago, then

T.

- Tackets, a kind of nails for driving into the heels of shoes
- Tae, a toe; *three-taed*, having three prongs
- Tairge, target; to examine
- Tak, to take; takin, taking
- Tald, or tauld, told

- Tangle, a sea-wood
 Tanga, tongs
 Tap, the top
 Tapetless, heedless, foolish
 Tapalteerie, topsy-turvy
 Tarrow, to murmur at one's allowance
 Tarry-breeks, a sailor
 Tartan, a kind of cloth chequered with stripes of various colours
 Taupie, a foolish, thoughtless young person
 Tauted, or tautie, matted together; spoken of hair or wool
 Tawie, that allows itself peaceably to be handled; spoken of a horse, cow, &c.
 Teat, a small quantity
 Tedding, spreading after the mower
 Ten-hours-bite, a slight feed to the horses while in the yoke in the forenoon
 Tent, a field-pulpit, heed, caution; to take heed
 Tentle, heedful, cautious
 Tentless, heedless
 Tough, tough
 Thack, thatch; *thack an' rape*, clothing necessaries
 Thae, these
 Thairma, small guts, saddle-strings
 Thankit, thanked
 Theekit, thatched
 Thegither, together
 Thick, intimate, familiar
 Thievless, cold, dry, spited; spoken of a person's demeanour
 Thiggas, begging
 Thir, these
 Thirl, to thrill, to vibrate
 Thole, to suffer, to endure
 Thowt, a thaw; to thaw
 Thowless, slack, lazy
 Thrang, throng, a crowd; to be busy
 Thrapple, the throat, the windpipe
 Thraw, to twist, to contradict
 Thracap, to maintain by dint of assertion
 Threshie, threshing
 Thretsch, thirteen
 Thrisle, a thistle
 Through, to go on with, to make out
 Throuther, pell-mell, confusedly
 Thud, to make a loud intermittent noise; a blow producing a dull heavy sound
 Thumpit, thumped
 Thilt, to it
 Timmer, timber
 Tise, to lose; tint, lost; *tint the gate*, lost the way
 Tinkler, a tinker
 Tip, a ram
 Tippence, twopence
 Tirl, to make a slight noise, to uncover, to knock
 Tittie, sister
 Tittle, to whisper
 Techer, marriage portion
 Tod, a fox
 Toddle, to totter, like the walk of a child
 Toom, empty
 Tous, a hamlet, a farm-house
 Tout, the blast of a horn or trumpet; to blow a horn, &c.
 Tow, a rope
 Towmond, a twelvemonth
 Towzie, rough, shaggy
 Toy, a very old fashion of female head-dress
 Toyte, to totter like old age
 Trams, shafts
 Trahtrie, trash
 Trews, stockings and breeches all of one piece
 Trig, spruce, neat
 Trow, to believe
 Trowth, truth, a petty oath
 Trysted, appointed; *is tryste*, to make an appointment
 Tug, raw hide, of which, in old times, plough-traces were frequently made
 Tulzie, a quarrel; to quarrel, to fight
 Twa, two
 Twa-three, a few
 'Twad, it would
 Twal, twelve; *twal-penny-worth*, a small quantity, a penny-worth
 N. B. One penny English is 12d. Scotch.
 Twis, to part, to deprive
 Tyke, a dog

U.

Unco, strange, uncouth, very great, prodigious
 Unco, news
 Unfold, unfold
 Unscathed, unajured, unhurt
 Unsicker, unsure, unsteady
 Upo', upon
 Urchin, a hedge-hog, a term of slight anger
 Uquahac, a kind of whisky

V.

Vap'rin, vapouring, bragging
 Vauntic, proud
 Vera, very
 Viri, a ring round a column, &c.
 Vittle, victuals
 Vogle, proud, vain

W.

Wa', wall; wa's, walls
 Webster, a weaver
 Wad, would, to bet; a bet, a pledge
 Wadna, would not
 Wae, wee, sorrowful
 Wamucks! or wae me! alas! O the pity!
 Waff, the cross thread that goes from the shuttle through the web; woof
 Waifu', wailing
 Wair, to lay out, to expend
 Wale, choice; to choose
 Walie, ample, large, jolly; an interjection of distress
 Wame, the belly
 Wamefu', a belly-full
 Wanchancie, unlucky, ill-omened
 Warrestfu', restless, uneasy
 Ware, wore
 Wark, work
 Wark-bume, a tool to work with
 Wari or ward, world
 Warlock, a wizard
 Warly, worldly, eager on amassing wealth
 Warren, warrant; to warrant
 Warst, worst

Warstl'd, or wardl'd, wrestled
 Wastrie, prodigality
 Wat, wet; I waf, I wot, I know
 Water-broae, broae made of meal and water simply, without the addition of milk, butter, &c.
 Wattle, a twig, a wand
 Wauble, to swing, to reel
 Waukit, thickened as fullers do cloth; folded, clenched
 Waukrife, not apt to sleep
 Waur, worst; to worst, to defeat
 Wean, or weanie, a child
 Wearie, or weary; *menie a wearie body*, many a different person
 Weason, weasand
 Wee, little; wee-things, little ones; wee bit, a small matter
 Weel, well; weelfare, welfare
 Weet, rain, wetness
 Weird, fate
 We'se, we shall
 Wha, who
 Whaile, to whence
 Whalpit, whelped
 Whang, a leathern string, a piece of cheese, bread, &c.; to give the strap-pado
 Where, where
 Whase, whose
 Whatrack, nevertheless
 Whaep, the carlew
 Whorp, to fly nimbly, to jerk; *gray whorp*, small beer
 Whid, the motion of a hare, running but frightened; a lie
 Whigmaleerie, whims, crotchets
 Whingie, crying, complaining, fretting
 Whirligigums, useless ornaments, trifling appendages
 Whisht, silence; *te-hold ene's whisht*, to be silent
 Whisk, to sweep, to lash
 Whistle, whistle
 Whitter, a hearty draught of liquor
 Whittle, a knife, a sword; *a' reeking whittle*, a bloody sword
 Whun-stane, a whin-stone
 Whyles, whiles, sometimes

WI', with
 Wick, to strike a stone in an oblique direction; a term in curling
 Wicker, willow (the smaller sort)
 Widdlefu', wrathful, angry
 Widdle, a struggle, bustle, effort
 Wicl, a small whirlpool
 Wiffo, a diminutive or endearing term for wife
 Wight, strong, courageous
 Wilfu', stubborn
 Williyart, bashful, reserved, timid
 Wimple, to meander
 Win, to winnow
 Win', wind; win's, winds
 Win't, winded, as a bottom of yarn
 Winna, will not
 Winneck, a window
 Winsome, hearty, vaunted, gay
 Wintle, a staggering motion; to stagger, to reel
 Winne, an oath
 Wiso, to wish
 Withouten, without, in want of
 Wizen'd, hide-bound, dried, shrunk
 Woner, a wonder, a contemptuous appellation
 Wone, dwells, resides
 Woo', wool
 Woo, to court, to make love
 Woodie, a rope, more properly one made of withs or willows, a halter
 Wooc-bab, the garter knotted below the knee with a couple of loops
 Wordy, worthy
 Worst, worsted

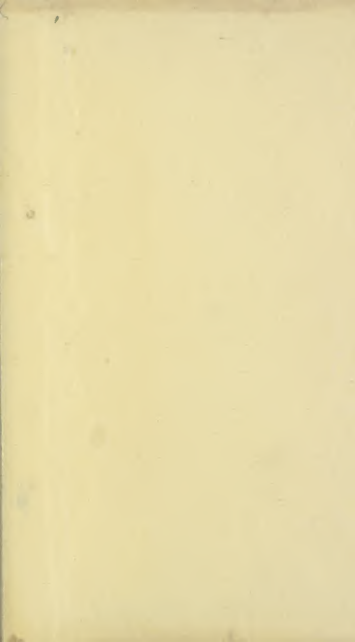
Wow! an exclamation of pleasure or wonder
 Wrack, to wreck, to tease, to vex
 Wrath, a spirit, a ghost; an apparition exactly like a living person, whose appearance is said to forebode the person's approaching death
 Wraag, wrong; to wrong
 Wreeth, a drifted heap of snow
 Writers, attorneys, lawyers
 Wud-mad, distracted, wild
 Wumble, a wimble
 Wyle, beguile
 Wyliccoat, flannel vest
 Wyte, blame; to blame

Y.

Ye, this pronoun is frequently used for *she*
 Yealings, born in the same year, co-evals
 Year, (is used both for singular and plural) years
 Yearns, small eagles
 Yell, barren, that gives no milk
 Yerk, to lash, to jerk
 Yestreen, yesternight
 Yett, a gate, such as is usually at the entrance into a farm-yard or field
 Yeuks, itches
 Yill, ale
 Yird, earth
 Yokin, yoking, a yoke
 Yont, beyond
 Yowe, an ewe; yowie, dimin. of yowe
 Yule, Christmas

THE END.







BURN'S MONUMENT
ON THE BANKS OF THE DOON