THE

LIFE

OF

ROBERT BRUCE,

KING OF SCOTLAND.

A HEROIC POEM,

IN THREE BOOKS.

By JOHN HARVEY, M. A.

—*FUIMUS* Troes, *fuit*, Ilium, & *ingens*
Gloria Peucrorum, *fuit imnia* Jupiter Argus
Transtulit. VIRG. Æn. 2.

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TO THE AUTHOR.

BRIGHT as from chaos sprung the universe,
Shines Scotland's hero in your polish'd verse;
And as from thraldom and oppression he
Majestic rose his native land to free.
With equal vigour, and as glorious rage,
Thro' the rude gibberish of a barb'rous age,
You march and fetch his noble acts to light,
In numbers daring as himself in fight.
Let carping critics, foes, yet friends to fame,
Their utmost do, thy well meant work to blame;
Such is the temper of thy manly page,
As soothes their venom and restrains their rage:
Foil'd, like the foes of the great BRUCE you sing,
Submissive they retreat, and own the victor king;
Such is thy work by opposition made,
And such the glory round it vanquish'd critics shed.

W. P.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD BRUCE.

My Lord,

The ensuing poem presumes to shelter itself under your patronage, not upon account of its merit, but in confidence of its title. Robert Bruce was born to make his own way to greatness and to renown, to become the love and astonishment of mankind, and hath in a manner secured the success of any honest and tolerable endeavour in his behalf Whilst others may strain hard to distinguish their heroes and themselves, the least attempt in his favour shines back upon the author, and gilds him with the reflections of his glory.

Unknown, my Lord, but thus supported, I have ventured into your presence; 'tis thus I have dared to be bold, in spite of my imperfections and obscurity; nor am I ignorant of the danger and delicacy that attends such an essay as is that of the life of Robert Bruce, king of Scots; the very mention of whose name can consign to fame or condemn to infamy for ever—A name, that hath long ago disarm'd malice and flattery at once; and hath set itself equally above libel and panegyric. I shall hope the best, I am sure I have meant well, and your Lordship knows, perfection is no prerogative of humanity.

If his character then can effect at such a rate the least remembrance of him, even in an obscure person, and a stranger, what glory must it diffuse amongst his kindred? What honour devolve upon posterity? Your noble family, my Lord, need not have recourse to the herald office for a coat or an escutcheon; you have many a gallant field to furnish out the device, and Bannockburn to distinguish the bearing. The descendants of Robert Bruce need not envy those actions that are handed down to us in the sounding rhetoric of Greece, or that appear in the brightest pomp of Roman eloquence. By him the laurels of Marathon have been rivalled on the banks of the Forth; nor do the Grampian plains give way to those of Pharsalia.

It is not, my Lord, the intent of this address to encroach upon your time, or to run a length of encomium equally nauseous and suspected All my design is to beg your Lordship's protection to an essay on the reign of your great ancestor; one of the most renowned princes (as Buchanan, no great friend to monarchy, owns) that ever swayed a sceptre. I hope his character has suffered as little in my hands as it has by any former attempt this way. And if you can find any account in the perusal of these sheets, that with the continued honour and happiness of your illustrious family, (now the only rival of its great originals, Huntington and Carrick) shall complete the satisfaction of,

My Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient,
and devoted servant,

JOHN HARVEY.

PREFACE.

I do not pretend, in the following sheets, to present the reader with an epic poem. All I presume is, that I have wrote something in imitation of one, as will, I hope, appear from the subsequent hints. To begin then with the action, it ought to be founded on historical truth, or may be founded upon fable. The patrons for the absolute necessity of fable have the whole current of antiquity against them: For when they have thrown Lucan and Statius out of the class of epic writers among the ancients, and Tasso and Milton among the moderns, because their poems were not founded upon fiction, yet unluckily the Iliad and Æneid stand in the way, built upon certain fact, upon true and undeniable history.

That the Æneid is grounded upon fact, is plain from the joint testimony of all the Roman historians. The account of Æneas coming into Italy, settling there, and giving the first rise to the Roman state, which was founded by his successor about three hundred years after him, has been confirmed by the grand voice of antiquity for upwards of two thousand years, and is only opposed by a supercilious critic or two, who would pretend (in order to be singular and consequently distinguished) that Æneas never came into Italy. I have not time to enter into the merits of their side of the question; nor do I think it necessary, since the majority on ours must determine the case, and render the assertion of a single person or two of very little or no moment at all.

That the Iliad is likewise founded upon historical truth, is plain from the unanimous consent of all antiquity; and if we should reject every account besides, yet we never can that of Dares Phygius, and Dictys Cretenesis, who both served at the siege of Troy; the one on the Trojan side, the other on the Grecian, under Idomeneus, king of Crete. This last was particularly enjoined by that prince, to write the memoirs of so remarkable a siege; which he did in Phœnician characters, upon the barks, or rather rhinds of Linden trees; and ordering at his death a copy to be interred with him in a tin chest, it was done at Gnossus, the place of his birth and burial. But his grave having been afterwards thrown open by an earthquake, some peasants found the chest, and delivered it to their master Eupraxides, by whom it was carried to Rutilius Rufus, the Roman proconsul in those parts, and by him sent to Nero the emperor, who commanded the history to be translated into Greek, the Latin version whereof is now in every boy's hands. So that we see the only two epic poems (at least those that are allowed for such) are founded on real histori-

cal truth, and as certain fact, as is the poem called the life of Robert Bruce, king of Scots.

The time of action, beginning at the battle of Methven, which fell out, according to Buchanan, on the 13th of the callender of August, or the 18th of July, to the battle of Bannockburn, which happened on the 21st of June after, comprehends eleven months and some days. The action itself is one according to the strictest rules.

The particular attempts of James Douglas, Edward Bruce, Thomas Randolph, &c. make up the different episodes, which are all subservient to the grand action.

I hope the moral is as clear, and as plainly deducible from the subject, as can possibly be desired. Pity, patience, and courage, are inculcated on the reader, from the character of Robert Bruce, where they shone in so conspicuous a manner. The pride, the violence, and tyranny of his foreign enemies, the treachery, villany, and at last the total ruin of his rebellious subjects, are set in their proper light The first part to be imitated by every prince, the latter to be detested by every person who is honest, and a lover of his country.

As to the number of books in a heroic poem, there can, I presume, be no stated rule; or, if there is, and if Homer be the standard, Virgil is in the wrong; but Homer cannot be the standard, nor was the Iliad ever divided by him into books, but sung or recited in little broken sketches, called by the Greeks rhapsodies; and were so handed about, till (because they contained excellent maxims, both civil and military) they are collected by Lycurgus, the great lawgiver of the Spartans, and after him digested into that order they now appear in amongst us by Solon and others.

Machines are parts of a poem introduced upon extraordinary occasions. When a difficulty occurs that exceeds all probability of being unravelled by human means, then the poet must have recourse to some superior power, whose intervention is requisite for clearing the embarrassment. I have introduced them but sparingly, and never, I think, but upon necessity. As to the manners and characters, I hope, they are pretty evenly preserved; but I leave the judgment of the whole to the reader.

I have used the word South 'ron, as it was a term in those days peculiarly appropriated by the Scots to the English, upon the account of their situation in respect to them; and because it has more of the air of those times than the ordinary appellation; and, where the word Southern is made use of (which I think is but once), it denotes the south parts of Scotland. I do not remember any thing further worth observing, where any escapes do occur, the reader may pardon or correct them as he thinks fit.

THE

LIFE

OF

ROBERT BRUCE,

KING OF SCOTLAND.

BOOK I.

WHILST I, unequal, 'tempt the mighty theme,
And raise advent'rous to the Brucian name:
Whilst in my soul a filial ardour reigns,
To sing the hero sweating on the plains;
Immers'd in ills, and long with foes beset,
By caution now, now desperately great:
Be present Phœbus, in the op'ning scenes,
Inspire my thoughts, and regulate my strains:
Tell how the hero triumph'd o'er his foes,
Grew in distress, and on his dangers rose.

In former ages, and in ancient reigns,
When sense and honour grac'd * Ierne's plains:
When her high monarchs and her heroes stood
In streams of † Cimbrian and Saxon blood:
Proud of her sons, old ‡ Caledonia dar'd
The haughty foe, nor foreign insult fear'd:
Her monarchs then, to lineal honours grew,
And conquest grac'd each hero's awful brow.

In those remoter times (as fame hath said),
§ A prince renown'd th' Albanian sceptre sway'd;

* Ierne, from the old Gallican word Eryn, or Heryn, signifies a country that lies towards the west; it is commonly taken for that part of Scotland called Strathern, and figuratively for the whole nation.

† Cimbrian was the ancient name of the warlike people, now called the Danes, who over-run many nations, conquered England, but received so frequent overthrows in this country, that Scotland was called Danorum Tumulus, the grave of the Danes.

‡ Caledonia, properly taken for that part of Scotland which runs along the face of the hills from Aberdeen into Cumberland, and figuratively for the whole.

§ Alexander III. who died by a fall from his horse at Kinghorn, (Albaniar, &c.) from Albin, or Albinch, the name given to Scotland by the Highlanders.

Well fam'd his person, and well form'd his soul,
True majesty and mercy tun'd the whole.
Unhappy day! wherein the wise, the great,
Upon the banks O Forth resign'd to fate!
May that dire day be from our annals torn,
Nor let the sun once cheer the guilty morn.
Since then, what slaughter rag'd on Scotia's shore,
And drench'd the mother in the children's gore?
* What dire oppression on her mountains reign'd?
What blood and rapine all her valleys stain'd?
The barb'rous marks of curst tyrannic sway,
Of lawless might, and kingly perjury.
Beneath her ills, † old Caledonia groans,
Mourns her vast cities, and her slaughter'd sons;
Behold unnumber'd legions crowd her strand,
And lust and havoc ravage all the land.
Greatly distress'd, impatient of the day,
‡ Slow to a Grampian cave she bends her way:
There, like some ruin'd pile, great in decay,
Sunk in her woes the sacred matron lay;
Deep in the grot, upon a mossy bed,
Silent reclines her venerable head.
Thus waits till these dear accents reach'd her ear,
The barb'rous foe now triumphs on thy shore,
And the fam'd Caledonia is no more.
Unhappy sound! the matrons doleful cries,
Assail th' immortals, and fatigue the skies,
At last, omnipotence beholds our ills,
And pity straight the eternal bosom fills.
'Twas night; but where above yon azure skies,
Empyreal domes on flaming columns rise;
High arch'd with gold, with blazing em'ralds bright,
Far thro' the void diffuse a purple light;

* No body needs to be informed of Edward I. of England being chosen arbiter in the controversy betwixt Bruce and Baliol for the crown of Scotland, his unjust usurpation, and the miseries that kingdom was reduced to by his means.

† This prosopœia, or fiction of persons, every reader knows to be common, especially in poetry.

‡ The mountains of Grauzeben, commonly called the Grampian hills, run from Aberdeen in the north to Dunbarton in the west; and continue the braes of the Mearns, Angus, Perthshire, and the Lennox, and several counties beside.

There shining regions feel no fading ray,
Lost in the splendours of eternal day,
Enthron'd amidst the strong effulgence sat,
The pow'r supreme! surrounding spirits wait.
He calls the guardian of the Scotish sway,
And Ariel hastens through the choirs of day.
Then from the throne, th' immortal silence broke,
(Trembled the solid heavens as he spoke),
* Fly, Ariel, fly, and let a guardian's hand,
Prevent the ruin of this fav'rite land;
Old Caledonia, once thy pious care,
O'erturn'd with blood, with ravage, and despair,
Old Caledonia, sunk beneath her ills,
Whither loud cries th' eternal mansion fills.
† Haste, and the youth, whom heav'n hath chose inspire
With filial duty, and with martial fire;
Arm his intrepid soul to save the state,
Preserve his mother and reverse her fate.
He spoke. The seraph bows and wings his way
Swift o'er the realms of unextinguish'd day:
Down thro' the lower spheres directs his flight,
And sails incumbent on inferior night.
Where Tay thro' verdant valleys rolls his waves,
And fair Ænei's fruitful borders laves:
Rear'd on its margin old Alectum stands,
Whose rising spires o'erlook the neighb'ring lands.
The youthful hero here, all silent lay,
And in soft slumbers lull'd the cares of day.
With speed th' immortal Nuncio hither flies,
And Fergus' air and shape his form disguise.

* It is hoped the reader will allow the justice of this piece of machinery, because of its necessity. Scotland was now reduced in a manner beyond all human means of recovery. Nothing could save it but the intervention and influence of some superior power. This the author, with submission, thought a *dignus vindice nodue*, a difficulty that required such an interposal, and consequently introduced the machine.

† Sir William Wallace of Ellersly, who stood for the liberties of Scotland in opposition to the usurpation of Edward I. The reader will please to observe here, that the author designs not a particular detail of the actions of Sir William Wallace, but only so far as they immediately concern the affairs of Robert Bruce: and therefore he brings Wallace directly to the battle of Falkirk, where, in a conference with that prince, he lays before him the treacherous designs of the English king, and convinces him of his own loyalty to his country and the Brucian interest.

Approaching soft, his wond'ring eyes he fix'd
On the young hero's bloom, with manly vigour mix'd;
But saw, while slumbers thus his limbs invest,
Short sighs and groans alternate heave his breast.
His country's wrongs still in his bosom roll,
Invade his dreams, and rack his gen'rous soul.
'Twas now the aerial minister began,
And in great Fergus' voice address'd the man.
Arise, my son, thy dauntless arm oppose,
To this vast deluge of thy barb'rous foes.
Involv'd in blood, see thy dear country lies,
And her loud plaints have reach'd the pitying skies.
To thee, O youth divine, whom fate decrees
Restorer of thy country's liberties;
To thee this sacred charge from heaven I bring,
Commission'd by the gods' eternal King.
Rouse then, my son, exert thy warlike pow'r,
And drive the foe from this unhappy shore;
Date thy renown from this auspicious day,
And save from ruin the Fergusian sway,
He said, and mounting in a blaze of light,
The seraph reascends the empyreal height.
By this Aurora, in her chariot drawn,
Had ting'd the ruddy east, and blush'd the dawn,
When call'd by heav'n to manage heav'n's designs,
In glitt'ring steel the Ellerslain hero shines;
Born to chastise the pride of perjur'd kings,
Quick to the field the youthful warrior springs.
While higher names (a base degen'rate crowd)
Stain their proud titles, and disgrace their blood;
For factious ends, their country's rights forego,
Treach'rous retire, or impious, aid the foe.
Others more honest, but by power opprest,
Had tamely purchas'd an inglorious rest;
Only a few, whose thoughts by heaven inspir'd,
And with the sacred love of freedom fir'd,
Bravely disdain'd the proud usurper's sway,
Nor fraud nor force their gen'rous souls betray.
These on their country's freedom fix their eyes,
And threats and promises alike despise.
Immortal chiefs! who (if my artles rhyme,
Can gain upon the injuries of time)

Shall live, to late posterity renown'd,
With wreaths of everlasting laurel crown'd.
Amongst the first, the brave * Limonian thane,
And Hay and Lauder glitter'd on the plain;
The daring Seaton, and the faithful Boyd,
Dauntless approach, and close the hero's side:
Ramsay and Lyle, and Stewart of race divine,
In awful pomp and dreadful honours shine;
Crawford and Campbell (long a loyal name),
Array'd in steel to that assembly came;
Then Keith and Murray, with their shining shields,
And Baird and Barclay, loyal, grace the fields.
Each warrior led a small, but honest band,
Fix'd to the interests of his native land.
Cumming approach'd, ten thousand in his train,
The fatal ruin of the future plain.
The Gordon to a length of honour born,
Ruthven and Kerr the randezvous adorn.
Cleland and Auchinleck, a faithful pair,
Haste to the field, and gen'rous aid the war.
Now last of all appears upon the plain,
The love and wonder of the warlike train,
Intrepid Graham, the martial pomp to crown,
Array'd in burnished steel severely shone.
The chiefs at once the godlike man accost,
And fondly welcome to the loyal host;
From out the throng the leader quickly ran,
And to his bosom prest the gallant man:
Hail, dearest brother! welcome to my arms.
Born to redress thy ruin'd country's harms;
Straight at thy presence vanish all my cares,
And all my anxious dread of future wars,
He said. The chief advancing on the plain,
With graceful mien salutes the warrior train.
By this the sun had shot a fainter ray,
And down the western steep had roll'd the day;
When to Falkirk, enclos'd with verdant meads,
The gen'rous host the Ellerslain hero leads:
From thence to the Torwood their way they chose,
And 'midst its shades enjoy'd a soft repose.

* Earl of Lennox.

Now o'er the * Ochiel heights the rising beam,
Darts thro' the rustling leaves a wavy gleam:
When from the wood advancing to the plain,
In martial honours shone the Grampian train;
The darling leader waves his awful hand,
And list'ning chiefs in silent order stand.
Approaching squadrons next enclose the man,
While from a rising ground he thus began.

'Immortal sons of Albion's ancient race,
'Whom faith unstain'd and loyal honours grace;
'Whose noble ancestors, undaunted stood
'In streams of Cimbrian and of Saxon blood;
'Whom Rome's imperial arms essay'd in vain,
'Her eagle's shrinking on the bloody plain:
'Behold my friends your ruin'd country's woes,
'And view the triumphs of her barb'rous foes.
'Gasping in death, see Caledonia lies,
'And to the heavens and you for succour cries.
'You! whom, of all her progeny, she owns
'Her genuine offspring, and her duteous sons.
'Behold your aged sires in fetters pin'd,
'Or to a dungeon's noisome depth confin'd;
'With upcast eyes implore your filial aid,
'And feebly sink against the hoary head.
'Behold our ravish'd virgins and our youth,
'The spoils and victims of † the perjur'd South:
'Yourselves from all your dearest pledges torn,
'With want opprest, with infamy and scorn;
'Thro' woods and wilds and lonely deserts toss'd,
'Expos'd to summer suns and winter frost,
'Whilst the proud South'rons, by no power withstood,
'Pillage your fortunes, and debauch your blood.
'Unhappy Scots! are all our heroes fled?
'‡ Our Kenneths, and our § Malcolms dead,

* Ocelli Montes, the Ochiel hills, lie betwixt Strathern, Clackmannan, and Kinross-shire, and for the most part are all green.

† Edward I. of England had sworn to determine impartially in the controversy betwixt Bruce and Paliol; but, breaking that oath, endeavoured to usurp the sovereignty himself.

‡ The Picts, having joined the Romans and Britons against the Scots, defeated them, and slew their king; but, at last, by the valour of Fergus II. the Scots were restored, and afterwards engaging the Picts under M'Alpin, alias Kennithmore, they overthrew them, and pursued their victory to the extirpation of their name.

§ Kenneth III. and Malcolm II. famous for those dreadful overthrows they gave the Danes.

'Our Hays, and Keiths, and our immortal Grahams? *
'And all our glorious list of ancient names?
'Was it for this those mighty heroes stood
'In storms of death and crimson scenes of blood?
'Did those stern patriots in battle shine,
'To save their country, and secure their line;
'When Tay beheld them, and the trembling Forth,
'Mix in dire conflict with the warlike North?
'And shall no son confess his gen'rous sire?
'No bosom kindle with the glorious fire?
'See! yonder Longcarty's and Baray's plain,
'Still red with carnage of the slaughter'd Dane?
'Those very fields where your great fathers fought,
'And 'midst a waste of death your freedom bought.
'Rouse then, and let those names your breasts inspire
'With manly ardour, and with loyal fire.
'Let your great fathers all your souls possess,
'And dauntless arms your country's wrongs redress.
'See! where the haughty South, in bright array,
'From yonder shining plains reflect the day.
'Behold Plantagenet, with awful pride,
'In burnish'd gold amidst his squadrons ride!
'Come, gallant friends, attack the perjur'd host,
'And drive th' insulting legions from our coast.'
He said. The chiefs, obedient, hail the man,
And thro' the host consenting murmurs ran.
By this the South'ron trumpets from afar,
In shriller notes proclaim the advancing war:
Till daring Scots return the martial sound,
And from the hills the loud alarms rebound.
Approaching now the embattl'd squadrons stand,
And in stern order glitter on the strand;
The thick'ning war around obscures the fields,
With groves of lances arm'd, and bossy shields,
As when some dusky cloud o'ershades the main,
The breeze but whisp'ring o'er the liquid plain,
Scarce heaves the surges, ocean seems to sleep,
And a still horror settles on the deep;
Thus silent. The thick legions form around,
And the dread battles blacken all the ground.

* A short account will be given of them in their proper places.

But here, alas! how shall a Scotish muse
Thy fatal crime, * O Cumbernald, excuse?
Fain would the muse th' ungrateful theme decline,
Or wipe the tarnish from the tainted line;
Fain would in silence pass th' ill omen'd scene,
The chiefs embroil'd, and the deserted plain,
What direful woe from wild ambition springs?
The wreck of empires, and the bane of kings.
Discord with hideous grin and livid eyes,
Swift thro' the host on sooty pinions flies.
Discord! Ambition's direful brood, beheld
Ten thousand treacherous Scots forsake the field.
Traitors! whose names no annals since have own'd,
Wrapt in disgraceful night, in dark oblivion drown'd.
Urg'd by his wrongs, and with resentment fir'd,
The Ellerslain hero from the plain retir'd.
Ten thousand Scots with tears their chief attend,
The sun himself ne'er saw a braver band.
So great Achilles, on the Phrygian strand,
Injur'd by Atreus' sons unjust command,
Full of his wrongs, deserts his country's cause,
And all his myrmidons from Troy withdraws.
Left in the field the noble Stewart alone,
Before his few but faithful squadrons shone.
And now great Hartford thunders on the plain,
And twice ten thousand glitter in his train.
The hardy Stewart abandon'd to his foes,
Dauntless to meet that dreadful battle goes.
Twelve hundred Scots (no more had fate allowed)
To guard their lord around the standard crowd.
The war begins, the blended clamours rise,
And shouts and groans, promiscuous rend the skies;
The glorious Bute undaunted scours the field,
His doughty hands a mighty faulcheon wield.

† Cumming, Earl of Cumbernald, had joined the army at Falkirk with ten thousand men. But having himself an eye to the crown, and either suspecting or disdaining the success of Sir William Wallace, a private gentleman. much inferior to his rank, but the guardian of Scotland, caused Stewart, Lord Bute, fall out with him about leading the van of the Scots army, alleging that post was due to his family, Wallace insisted on the privilege of his office, and they parted from one another in high chaff. Wallace drew up his men, and Cumming, having wrought his design, treacherously retired also, and abandoned Lord Stewart to the fury of the whole English army.

O'er South'ron necks he hews his horrid way,
While roll'd in heaps, expiring squadrons lay.
Hartford beheld his fainting legions yield,
And Edward's glory fading on the field:
Amaz'd he views the chief's unbounded might,
Despairs success, and meditates his flight.
The Scots, by their great leader's pattern taught,
Advancing, with redoubled fury fought.
Back to the camp Lord Hartford wings his way
And on the plain ten thousand victims lay.
Immortal Stewart! O were my bosom fir'd
With ardours like to those thy soul inspir'd,
The muse should raise a trophy to thy fame,
Great as thy worth, and deathless as thy name.
But see! where Bruce array'd in martial pride,
And crafty Beik before their squadrons ride.
Towards the Scots they shape their dreadful way,
And forty thousand helms reflect the day.
Waving in air the gilded lion flies,
And loud the trumpets echo through the skies.
Tir'd with late toils, the noble Bute beheld
The swarming legions crowd the bloody field:
Anxious and doubtful view'd their mighty pow'r,
And the firm ranks extended on the shore;
Amaz'd at first, his spirits backward roll,
And by degrees forsake his gen'rous soul;
He casts his eyes around, but sees no aid;
Wallace is injur'd, and the traitor fled.
O deadly gust of passion! direful heat!
Dang'rous to all, but fatal to the great!
In glowing minds but low resentment dwells,
And their gross blood scarce o'er its channel swells;
Spirits high born, like meteors in the sky,
Ferment in storms, and round in ruin fly.
Relentless Ellersly, ah, canst thou stand,
And see the hero butcher'd on the stand!
The hero, whom so recent laurels crown,
By numbers and superior force undone;
O send the godlike Graham and save these few,
Or send the faithful Boyd to their rescue;
Or let the gen'rous Seaton's tears prevail,
To share the day, and turn the fatal scale.

Behold the chiefs all suppliant beg around,
Their tears in torrents trickling to the ground.
In vain. Unmov'd, the injur'd leader stands,
Weeps aloud, and yet denies their just demands.
With eager haste approach the Saxon lines,
And in the front * the rev'rend warrior shines.
The noble Bute beheld the num'rous bands,
Whilst recollected in himself he stands;
Then rous'd his little host with fresh alarms,
And the shrill trumpet sounds again to arms;
Secure of glory, and a deathless name,
Lavish of life, he rushes into fame.
The signal giv'n, inflam'd with mutual rage,
Th' unequal squadrons furiously engage:
Thro' burnish'd steel fast bursts the streaming gore,
And rolls a purple current on the shore.
The cautious Beik each various scene beheld,
Long us'd in war, and harden'd to the field:
Extends his ranks, and summons fresh supplies,
And to surround the Scotish hero tries.
The glorious Bute perceiv'd his sly designs,
And with stern rage attack'd the moving lines;
His manly arm dealt fell destruction round,
And Saxon crowds lay gasping on the ground.
Their leader's pattern the bold Scots inspires,
And from their rage the rev'rend chief retires.
But now brave Stewart beholds a shining train,
In thick battalia marshall'd on the plain,
To succour Beik, full thirty thousand spears,
And at their head the mighty Bruce appears.
Display'd against his own, the lions glare,
And martial trumpets animate the war.
Deluded prince! soon shall thy soul bemoan
Those cruel deeds on Forth's fair borders done.
The gen'rous Bute weeps at the barb'rous sight,
When awful Bruce addrest him to the fight,
On his thin ranks a furious charge he made,
And roll'd in heaps on heaps the mangled dead.

* Anthony Beik, bishop of Durham, a great enemy to the Scots, more famous for his skill in the arts of war than in the gospel of peace, as a certain author remarks. This prelate headed 1000 men at the battle of Falkirk, raised by his own influence and authority.

Now Stewart beholds his little faithful band
Drench'd in their gore, and gasping on the strand;
With grief recounts their wonders on the plain,
Full twenty thousand by twelve hundred slain.
Great in distress; impatient of the light,
Resolv'd to die he rushes to the fight:
Fraught with despair, he dealt his blows around,
And South'ron blood fast stains the crimson ground.
But spent with former toils, o'ermatch'd with pow'r,
At last the hero sinks upon the shore.
Stretch'd on the strand the godlike patriot lies,
And shades eternal settle round his eyes.
How happy he who falls amidst his foes,
A sacred victim to his country's cause?
What tears, what vows, attend his parting breath?
In life how lov'd, and how ador'd at death?
Eternal monuments secure his fame,
And lasting glory dwells upon his name.
Sol's fiery steeds, down from the noon-day height,
Thro' western climes precipitate their flight,
Expanded skies the flaming chariot bore,
And rays declining gild the Hesperian shore.
The Ellerslain chief in burnish'd armour stands,
And beck'ning round him calls his daring bands.
Sullen and sad approach the warrior train,
And touch'd with woe, regard the fatal plain.
When thus the chief, 'You see our friends are lost,
'By treason murder'd on that bloody coast.
'The awful Bruce, yon mighty battle leads,
'And crafty Beik his select squadron heads.
'See where their haughty king in dread array,
'Moves from the camp, and hastes to share the day.
'Then say, what shall be done? the question's nice,
'And fate allows us but a dang'rous choice.
'If for supplies we should to Lothian go,
'Then furiously pursues the num'rous foe.
'Or if to the Torwood our rout we bend,
'Thro' Bruce's host we must that shelter find.
'Say then.' The chiefs assented to his will,
What he commanded eager to fulfil.
The hero then, all dreadful as a god,
To meet the Bruce, before his squadrons rode.

Ten thousand spears advancing in his train,
An iron forest! glitter'd o'er the plain.
By this Lord Bruce had rang'd his warlike lines,
And at their head in bloody armour shines.
But, O my muse, what god shall lead the way!
What inspiration guide thee through the day?
To sing the chiefs that never knew to yield,
Engag'd in furious combat on the field!
Phœbus assist, and all the Thespian throng,
Conjoin your voices, and exalt the song.
Both armies now approaching to the fight,
In blazing terrors shone confus'dly bright,
The sprightly trumpet's martial clangor's rise,
And roll in rattling echoes thro' the skies,
Glory and fame each hero's soul possest,
And death or triumph breath'd in every breast.
The war now mingling, fiery coursers bound,
And rushing squadrons shake the trembling ground.
Thro' polish'd steel fast streams of reeking gore,
And crimson torrents drench the purple shore.
There warlike Bruce exerts his awful might,
Here Wallace thunders thro' the bloody fight;
Behold great Graham force his resistless way,
Thro' all the ruins of the dreadful day;
Here Seaton, Hay, and Lauder, scour the plain,
There Boyd and Keith a distant fight maintain;
Yonder brave Kennedy in battle stands,
And great Montgom'ry joins his faithful bands.
The hardy Frazers for to charge prepare,
And dauntless Lundie rushes to the war.
See gallant Oliphant to battle ride,
Dundas and Scrimzeour glitt'ring at his side;
Yonder the haughty Turnbull takes the field,
And savage spoils glare in his orby shield,
Johnston and Rutherford, and Blair and Gray,
And Guthrie, Scot, and Lindsay, share the day.
Newbigging, Tinto, Little, grace the field,
And Holiday, who well could weapons wield,
Bold Holiday, in war a noble man,
Hastes to his * Eme, and combats in the van,

* An old Scots word for uncle.

Thro' hostile ranks they scatter fate around,
And twice four thousand gasp along the ground;
Quite thro' the South'ron host o'er Carron's flood,
To Torwood shades the Scots in safety rode.
Wallace alone, and Graham and Lauder stay,
Unsated with the slaughter of the day;
Greedy of fame, their fiery courses rein,
And drive impetuous back into the plain.
Three hundred men to guard the chiefs prepare,
Inur'd to blood, and harden'd to the war.
Where Saxon ranks in thickest order stood,
With awful force these dauntless warriors rode.
The Bruce could well the Scotish band perceive,
His legions rally, or just orders give,
With wounds transfix'd, all welt'ring in their gore,
Three hundred Saxons strew'd the bloody shore;
But now bold Bruce his strong battalion heads,
And thirty thousand to the onset leads;
* Cozen'd by fraud, and jealous of his right,
Wing'd with revenge he rushes on the fight;
Three worthy Scots pierc'd by his mighty hand,
Roll in their blood, and bite the purple strand.
The Ellerslain chief with sorrow sees them bleed,
And swell'd with rage he reins his fiery steed:
Against the Bruce directs his awful force,
The Bruce all dreadless meets the hero's course.
Charg'd in his left a mighty lance he wore,
And Wallace' hand a glitt'ring faulcheon bore,
Together fast the dauntless warriors ride,
And thro' bright steel soon bursts the blushing tide,
From Wallace' thigh transfix'd fast flows the gore,
And Bruce's courser tumbles on the shore.
The valiant bands soon mount the Bruce again,
Whilst Graham and Lauder thunder'd on the plain;
Thro' South'ron ranks these heroes urg'd their way,
And bore alone the fury of the day:
Whilst Wallace stood and stemm'd his bleeding wound,
In heaps the foe lay scatter'd on the ground.

* The elder Bruce, who was competitor with Baliol for the crown of Scotland, was imposed on by the king of England, and made believe that Wallace usurped the sovereignity, which occasioned his fighting here at Falkirk with his friends and vassals against the Scots.

His blood now staunch'd, the chief returns anew,
The hardy Graham and Lauder to rescue.
To their relief he rode in all his might,
Till cautious Beik advanced to the fight.
By numbers overpow'r'd the Scots retire,
Nor could great Graham restrain his martial ire.
A burnish'd sword in his strong hand he bore,
And forward rushing thro' the shock of war,
Before the Bruce he struck an English knight,
Where his gay glitt'ring crest stood polish'd bright;
With unresisted force, thro' helm and head,
Down to the collar glanc'd the shining blade;
The knight falls prostrate on the gory ground,
And blood and soul rush mingl'd thro' the wound,
A subtile knight, who saw the deadly blow,
Fir'd with resentment, meditates the foe,
As Graham return'd the crafty warrior spy'd,
Beneath his armour, a defenceless void,
In at his back full aim'd with cautious care,
Quite thro' his bowels glides the treach'rous spear;
The hero turn'd, and smote the cruel foe,
Just where the casque the vizor joins below:
Thro' steel and brain fast rush'd the forceful brand,
The noble Graham swoons on the bloody strand:
His latest proof of loyal valour shows,
And greatly falls amidst his country's foes.
When Ellersly the glorious chief beheld,
Bath'd in his blood, and stretch'd upon the field,
What sudden pangs his throbbing soul possest,
With rage and grief tumultuous tore his breast:
He weeps, he raves, abandon'd to despair,
Then wing'd with fury rushes to the war.
Enrag'd he rides amidst the thickest foe,
And certain death descends in ev'ry blow;
Bereft of reason, careless of his life,
Desp'rate he urges the unequal strife.
The bloody torrents thicken as they flow,
And heaps of slaughter the red level strow.
But now two strong battalions shape their way,
Their beamy lances glitt'ring in the day,
Led by bold Bruce the hero's steed they gore,
Fast bleeds the courser on the crimson shore.

Their spears in pieces hew'd the martial knight,
Then from the plain precipitates his flight,
O'er Carron's flood the wounded steed him bore,
Then fell down dead upon the farther shore.
Phœbus in western waves had drench'd his team,
And the brown twilight shed a dusky gleam;
To Torwood shades the Scotish troops repair,
Wallace and Kerr alone with equal care,
Silent on Carron's flow'ry borders stray'd,
Revolv'd the day, and mourn'd the valiant dead.
The South'rons too retire, and Bruce and Ray
Along the nearer banks pursu'd their way:
When thro' the gloom upon the distant side,
The hardy Bruce the Scotish chief espy'd,
The jutting rocks a straiter passage frame,
Lessen the channel and contract the stream.
There Wallace heard the leader call aloud,
And stopping, prest the margin of the flood:
When thus the Bruce—'I know thou art the knight,
'This day that dreadful led the Scots in fight.
'Amaz'd, I saw thee in dire combat stand,
'And curious mark'd the wonders of thy hand.
'To real worth a just applause we owe,
'Nor is it mine to stain a gen'rous foe:
'But say, what wild ambition fires thy soul?
'What rage and madness in thy bosom roll?
'Does the thin air of popular applause
'Engage thee, desp'rate in a sinking cause?
'Or does the lust of sway thus urge thee on
'To empty titles and a fancy'd throne?
'To wade thro' seas of thy dear country's blood,
'Borne on the breath of a tumultuous crowd?
'Dar'st thou presume to match the English force,
'Or stop the mighty Edward's boundless course?
'Vain man, dismiss that thirst of lawless sway,
'And due obedience to the victor pay;
'Preserve thy country from impending woe,
'And yield submissive to the conquering foe.'
Thus Huntington; when from the other side,
The Scotish chief in honest terms reply'd:—
'I own the charge: ambition fires my soul,
'And rage and madness in my bosom roll.

'Ambition to preserve a sinking state,
'Basely abandon'd by the faithless great;
'To save my country from the accursed crew
'Of barb'rous foes, and yet more barb'rous you!
'I claim no right, nor shall my pow'r employ
'To mount to titles, or to lawless sway;
'My soul hath still abhorr'd the gaudy dream,
'Of fancy'd rule, or an usurper's name;
'To save my country, if allow'd by fate,
'All other way disdaining to be great.
'Our actions are our glory or our shame,
'Nor borrow'd titles, nor an airy name.
'The peasant to renown may nobly rise,
'Whilst the proud tyrant undistinguish'd lies:
'Know then, I'll die, or set my country free,
'In spite of Edward, and in spite of thee:
'Thee, who by right should Albion's sceptre wield.
'Yet tear'st her bowels in the bloody field;
'Who, impious, return'st from yonder shore,
'Still warm and reeking with my country's gore.
'Before to-morrow's sun begin his course,
'Once more I'll dare to meet the South'ron force.
'For that dear land, where first I drew my breath,
'I'll seek the tyrant in the fields of death;
'Begirt with guards, and wall'd with legions round,
'I'll drive him, perjur'd, from our native ground.
'Farewell, deluded man, thy right forego,
'And bow a monarch to a treach'rous foe,
'Be a secure and glorious slav'ry thine,
'But death or liberty shall still be mine.'
Thus spoke the chief. His latest accents roll
Thro' Bruce's heart, and settle in his soul.
He finds himself by Edward's fraud misled,
And long by South'ron artifice betray'd:
Perceives the Scotish leader's loyal care,
His honest toils, and unambitious war.
Then thus—'You see, my friend, the doubtful light,
'Leads on the sable chariot of the night;
'Near Dunnipace, where stands a sacred fane,
'By nine next morning let us meet again.'
'No—long ere Phœbus runs that length of course,
'Reply'd the chief, we'll meet the tyrant's force;

'In spite of all the pow'r he has to sway,
'Fate shall before that time decide the day.
'He either shall his impious claim give o'er,
'And shamefully reseek his native shore;
'Or one of us shall fall in bloody fight,
'Impartial heav'n will judge our cause aright:
'But if you please th' appointment to assign,
'At three I'll meet you near the ancient shrine.'
The Bruce consented, and to Lithgow past,
To Torwood shades good Kerr and Wallace haste,
Refresh'd with food the host for rest prepare,
And in short slumbers hush the din of war.
Bright phosphor soon the vaulted azure gilds,
And stars, retiring, quit the airy fields;
The Scotish chief abandons his repose,
And arms of truth his manly limbs enclose.
With clasps around the temper'd mail he ties,
And graven cuishes glitter on his thighs:
Upon his head a shining casque he wore,
A staff of steel in his strong hand he bore,
A beamy faulcheon grac'd his manly side,
Boldly he seem'd in battle to abide:
His armour-bearer Jop went on before,
And the great warrior's massy buckler bore;
And forth the hero marching, views the lines,
And to each chief his proper post assigns:
Ramsay and Lundie, and the hardy Thane
Of Lennox, led five thousand to the plain;
Five thousand more himself and Lauder guide,
And Richardtoun and Seaton close their side.
To the late field they march'd in deep array,
And view the ruins of the former day.
There, what a horrid scene the sight confounds?
What heaps of carnage strew th' adjacent grounds?
And life scarce cold, yet bubbling thro' the wounds?
Along the strand, the floating streams of blood
Roll on its tide, and shoke the neighb'ring flood;
Here lay brave Stewart, and Rossia's gallant thane,
With honest wounds transfix'd upon the plain;
There lay great Graham, extended on the shore,
Lifeless and pale, and stain'd with clotted gore:
Him Wallace saw, and throbbing at the sight,
Alights and rushes to the worthy wight.

Up in his arms he rais'd his drooping head,
And thus, with tears, addrest the gallant dead :—
'Farewell, my best lov'd friend; a long adieu,
'To all th' illusive joys of life and you!
'Farewell, O grateful victim to our foes,
'Thou sacred martyr for thy country's cause!
'For her thou fought'st in dreadful fields of death;
'For her thus greatly thou resign'st thy breath;
'That warlike arm shall I behold no more,
'Thy faulcheon brandish on the bloody shore!
'No more those eyes shall fierce in battle glow,
'Thy friend's delight and terror of the foe.
'How is the mighty fallen on the plain?
'The chief, the hero, by a coward slain!
'Nor shall his soul the treach'rous triumph boast,
'Sad and confounded on the Stygian coast.
'Thy noble hand soon sent the dastard foe,
'Mangl'd and damn'd, down to the shades below!
'Ah! gallant man, what worth adorn'd thy mind?
'How brave an en'my, how sincere a friend?
'Sincere to me since first our love began,
'Thy David I. and thou my Jonathan.
'Thou wast the hope, the glory of my life,
'My better genius in the doubtful strife.
'Warm'd by thy presence, how did I disdain
'The toils and dangers of th' unequal plain?
'How did my soul with rising ardour glow,
'Lessen the hazard, and contract the foe?
'O'erlook the adverse host, when I beheld
'My brave companion thunder on the field?
'Old Albion shall in tears of blood bemoan
'The gallant patriot, and the duteous son.
'In thee her freedom and her honour dead,
'Her hopes all blasted, and her succour fled,
'Farewell, blest shade, may thine unspotted soul,
'Now rais'd on high to thy congenial pole,
'In flames of heav'nly raptures ever glow,
'And smile propitious on our toils below.'
He said. The host accompany their chief,
Burst into tears, and gave a loose to grief.
So once, of old, on the Molossian coast,
Bold Theseus mourn'd his dear Piritheus lost.

Now wash'd with blood, upon their shields they bore
The lifeless hero from the fatal shore;
With solemn pomp the mournful chiefs proceed,
And in the ancient fane inhume the dead;
To all the chieftains slain due rites they pay;
Then to the appointment Wallace bends his way.
The loss of Graham, and that unhappy field,
Inflam'd his soul when he the Bruce beheld:
Approaching quick the ireful chief began,
And in stern language thus addrest the man:—
'Dost thou repent thy base unnatural war?
'Or thirsts thy soul yet still for native gore?
'* Rew'st thou the actions of thy barb'rous hand,
'The cruel havoc on yon bloody strand?
'See those brave patriots, who too loyal came,
'To save their country and maintain thy claim;
'T' oppose a haughty tyrant's lawless might,
'And 'gainst thyself t' assert thy native right:
'See where lie distain'd with purple gore,
'By their own prince all murder'd on the shore;
'Behold the gallant Stewart and Rossia's thane,
'And godlike Graham late stretch'd upon the plain.
'Heroes! whose blood not armies can atone:
'By fraud and tyranny, and thee undone,
'Unhappy man!' More would the chief have said,
When, drown'd in tears, the noble Bruce reply'd:—
'Yes, generous friend! I saw the heroes stand
'Like gods in battle on yon bloody strand.
'Eager of fame, unknowing how to yield,
'How did they court the dangers of the field!
'O'ermatch'd with numbers, prodigal of life,
'How did they struggle in th' unequal strife;
'For their dear country, mix'd in dire debate,
'They strove with Heaven, and disputed fate;
''Twas I, deluded wretch! who led that pow'r
'Against my friends to this unhappy shore;
''Twas I, ill-fated I! whose guilty hand
'Dy'd with my native blood yon crimson strand.
'Poor hapless man, by fair pretences led
'To ruin, and by kingly fraud betray'd.'

* This is an ancient Scots word for repent.

Wallace with joy hears what the Bruce had said,
And on his knee a low obeisance made;
The South'ron pow'r he begg'd him to disown,
And reign a monarch on his native throne;
Against that crafty prince assert his claim,
Revenge his wrongs, and vindicate his name.
Alas: nor yet I dare, the Bruce reply'd,
Forsake that king, or quit the South'ron side;
My son an hostage for my fealty has,
Which if the sire should violate—he dies;
But here I vow, ne'er shall this guilty hand
A sword employ against my native land:
No more against my friends a weapon bear,
But soon as I escape the treacherous snare,
To thee I'll come, and on thy faith rely,
T' assert my title, and secure my sway.
This said, in arms he rais'd the gallant man,
And tides of joy thro' Wallace' bosom ran.
Betwixt them mutual kind endearments past,
Then parting, each revisited his host.
Waiting their chief on the late field of blood,
In order rang'd the Grampian squadrons stood.
Arriv'd, the hero mounts, and leads the way,
And the firm lines move on in close array.
By Inneravin Lennox guides his hand,
And hardy Crawford shares the earl's command;
Thus order'd thro' the lower way to ride,
Obscure, by South'ron watches unespy'd.
Wallace himself conducts a chosen band
On the south side, through Maxwell's rocky land.
To Lithgow straight, where mighty Edward lay,
Silent the hardy Lennox speeds his way;
Sudden amidst the tents in armour shines,
And hasty slaughter rages thro' the lines.
Spent with the labours of the former day,
Dissolv'd in sleep th' ill guarded South'ron lay.
When thro' the camp the clashing arms resound,
And hostile cries their drowsy souls confound.
Edward, amaz'd, beholds the sudden war,
And bids his legions for the fight prepare:
Enrag'd the courser mounts, and scours along,
And rouses with approach the sluggard throng.

Bold Heartfort hastes, to York his forces joins,
When Wallace ent'ring, thunders thro' the lines:
On South'ron ranks exerts his well-known might,
And drives conspicuous through the bloody fight;
Some naked, some half arm'd, a senseless throng,
Part stupid gaz'd, part run confus'd along.
Whilst the bold Scots distribute death around,
Steeds, tents, and squadrons, mingling on the ground:
The awful king stern in the battle shines,
And with his presence animates the lines.
To arms the hardy Bruce he calls aloud,
And twenty thousand round the hero crowd.
Resolv'd no more his subjects to offend,
The Bruce advances on his mock command.
Great as he wont before his squadrons rode,
Awful in steel, and dreadful as a god,
The usual fierceness kindles in his eyes,
And o'er his face dissembled terrors rise:
His beamy faulcheon brandishing in air,
He seems to charge, and counterfeits the war;
His threat'ning blows, if blows at all descend,
Fall innocent, as from a father's hand.
Wallace, mean time, and Lennox in their course,
Meet in the centre, and conjoin their force;
The warlike bands exert their utmost might,
And unresisted thunder thro' the fight;
Fir'd with resentment of the former plain,
Their country spoil'd, their brave companions slain;
Forward, united in their fury go,
And pour swift vengeance on their guilty foe.
Graham, and the chieftains lost, inspire each deed,
And to their ghosts ten thousand victims bleed;
Abas'd, the South'ron host for flight prepare,
And for the field fast speeds the vulgar war.
Only the king, now long renown'd in fame,
Combats for glory and asserts his name.
And other chiefs in martial honours great,
Before their monarch nobly meet their fate.
Against that king, to prove his awful might,
The Scotish chief rode furious thro' the fight;
Through all the force of the opposing foe,
Full at his vizor aim'd a deadly blow;

He miss'd the king, the standard-bearer's head
Asunder cleft the unresisted blade.
The royal standard, shameful, prest the plain,
Then fled, dismay'd, at once the South'ron train.
The hardy Scots their warlike steeds prepare,
And mounting swift pursue the flying war;
From * Glotta's banks to † Nithia's steepy coast,
With blood and slaughter drove the scatter'd host;
Pierc'd with dishonest wounds three thousand lie,
And Crawford muir with mingled carnage dye.
With tears great Edward views the dismal scene,
His bravest troops without resentment slain.
With rage and grief at once his soul opprest,
He turn'd, and thus the valiant Bruce address'd:
'Ah, Huntington; thou seest yon murdr'ing crowd,
'With slaughter tir'd, yet still athirst for blood,
'Our friends all butcher'd, and yon bloody heath
'One heap of carnage, and a waste of death.
'Wouldst thou but turn, and stop their barb'rous might,
'By all the pow'rs, I shall confirm thy right.'
He said: The Bruce in modest terms reply'd—
'Annul my bond, make my engagements void;
'Then shall I turn, attack the Scotish pow'r,
'And drive their legions back to Carron's shore.'
The rural statesman, vers'd in kingly art,
At once perceives his alienated heart;
Hence guards his motions, watches his designs,
And as a prisoner at large confines.
But now the warlike Scots approaching near,
Fall in with shouts and thunders on the rear.
With heavy heart the mighty Edward fled,
Mourn'd his lost honour, and his legions dead;
O'er Solway's stream, home to his native shore,
He leads the reliques of his vanish'd pow'r;
Full fifty thousand in that journey lost,
With mingled corpses strew'd the Scotish coast.
Thus far the muse, in just example sings
Of traitors, loyal chiefs, usurping kings;
Their deeds transmitting down to future times,
In faithful records, and unbias'd rhymes;
Of virtuous names she marks the glorious fate,
And brands with infamy the factious great;

* Clyde river. † Nithsdale.

Faction; thou dire, thou legionary fiend,
How dark thy views, how dismal is thy end?
What num'rous woes in thy black bosom dwell?
Or pride first founded and inspir'd by hell?
By thee the gods were mix'd in dire debate,
And daring faction shook the immortal state!
In bands combin'd, assail'd the sacred throne,
Till in his might arose th' eternal Son;
Full in his father's strength attacks the foe,
And hurls them flaming to th' abyss below:
Far from th' effulgence of superior light,
'Midst liquid fire to roll, and shades of deepest night.
Mankind, immortal, innocent, first fell,
By thee thou darling principal of hell;
Since uncontroul'd, thou spread'st thy boundless reign,
Inspir'st th' ambitious, and delud'st the vain.
This Wallace found, not all his gen'rous toils,
His glorious conquests and triumphant spoils,
Not all his brave attempts to free the state,
Could screen the patriot from the jealous great;
Beset by malice, and by fraud opprest,
(Yet green with laurels, and with triumphs grac'd).
The godlike leader to Edina came,
Renounc'd his pow'r, disclaim'd a guardian's name.
'Midst tears of loyal states resign'd his trust,
A willing exile from his native coast.
His causeless wrongs deep in his bosom sat,
And deeper still the ruin of the state;
Yet forc'd by faction, he forsakes the land,
His friends attend him to the briny strand.
In a lone bark they launch into the main,
The bounding vessel ploughs the wat'ry plain,
Aloft, inspiring gales, propitious blow,
Obsequious rolling roars the tide below,
Till fate from dangers of the liquid reign,
The warlike crew the Rochel harbour gain.
Farewell, thou gen'rous man! a long adieu
To wretched Albion's safety, and to you;
Who shall in arms dare to support her right.
What hardy chief shall lead her sons to fight?
Her once brave sons now terrified and aw'd,
At home by faction, and by pow'r abroad:

To woods and wilds, and lonely deserts go,
Forsake her cause, nor dare to meet the foe.
The foe again swarms on her crowded strand,
And fresh destruction sweeps her wasted land.
Farewell, brave injur'd man! thou boast of fame;
At once thy country's glory and her shame.
Nor shall the muse thy farther acts explore,
On Scotia's plains, or on the Gallic shore.
The weary muse here rests her drooping wing,
And conscious of thy fate, forbears to sing.
Some other genius shall the task attend,
And paint the villain in the perjur'd friend.
Nor shall the Bruce's fate her notes inspire,
Or tune to elegy the mournful lyre:
Secret she weeps the luckless father dead,
The scene o'ervailing with a silent shade,
Now fits the harp to a sublimer strain,
The godlike son, and his immortal reign.

BOOK II.

The South'ron trumpets sound the dread alarm,
The war rekindles, and the legions arm;
The younger Bruce is call'd from Gallia's shore,
For now the hapless father was no more.
In warlike pomp array'd the crowded host,
Moves sable onward to the Scotish coast.
As cranes embody'd, shade the ethereal plains,
Stretch'd on the wing to shun impending rains,
The airy host on sounding pinions flies,
(A living cloud) along the darken'd skies:
So wrapt in dust the South'rons shape their way,
Obscure the sun, and intercept the day.
Great in the van the mighty monarch shone,
And by his side in armour blaz'd the son.
Next mournful Bruce, before th' embattl'd crowd,
Full of his sire, in silent grandeur rode.
Thick swarm the hostile bands on Scotia's shore,
And sword and fire her poor remains devour.
To hills and dales her trembling sons retreat,
Their homes abandon to avoid their fate.

Mothers and infants share one common woe,
And, feebly flying, fall before the foe.
From Solway's stream to Caithness stormy strand,
One dismal waste of ruin sweeps the land.
As when some torrent, swell'd with wint'ry rains,
Rolls from the mountains, and o'erspreads the plains:
The swains and flocks o'erwhelm'd confus'dly roar,
And woods and harvests float along the shore.
Now fraught with spoils from far * Pomona's coast,
To Perth returns the † Trinobantian host.
From thence to Scoon the victor takes his way,
The sacred seat of Scotia's ancient sway;
Where twice ten centuries her monarch sat,
On seated marble, venerably great.
Imperial Scoon, how is thy pomp defac'd,
Thy archives rifl'd, and thy glories raz'd.
Thy sacred monuments (the prize of war),
And spoils of ages grac'd th' usurper's car,
The deeds and records of great Fergus' line,
The fatal stone torn from its hallow'd shrine:
The learned, and their works in triumph borne,
Agusta's cells and libraries adorn:
This Cumming saw, and spite of jealous hate,
Mourns the wide ruin of the wasted state.
Touch'd with the woeful scene, the Bruce addrest,
And thus with tears unfolds his lab'ring breast:—
'And Huntington? how long shall rival hate
'Divide our int'rest, and improve our fate?
'Thou seest our country by her foes opprest,
'One heap of ruin—one abandoned waste!
'Her laws and rights, and liberties forlorn,
'By foreign force, but more by faction torn.
'Should you to me convey your rights, then I
'To you make o'er my lands and property:
'Or, if to you my little I resign,
'Then your paternal heritage be mine.'
The Bruce accepts the last; and, thus agreed,
They sign and seal, and interchange the deed.
Meantime his rout against great Edward bends
Back to Augusta, and the Bruce attends.

* The largest of the Orkney islands.
† The Trinobantes were the people of Middlesex, &c. taken here for the English in general.

Wrapt in his hopes, impatient for the day,
T' assert his right, and vindicate his sway.
But now fell * Ate, scourge of human woes,
Dismal from depths of Tartarus arose.
Fir'd at th' agreement, the black fury fled,
And direful hovers round the Cumming's head:
In visionary scenes he hears her howl,
And feels th' ambitious venom in his soul;
The sooty spectre shed a noxious steam,
And her red eye-balls flash'd a noxious gleam.
Full of the demon, starting from his bed,
Disclaims his oath and the agreement made,
To Edward sends the writing seal'd and sign'd,
And shews malicious what the Bruce design'd.
Edward in council reads the hated scroll,
And sudden vengeance kindles in his soul.
Straightway the noble Bruce is doom'd to bleed,
But fate forbade, and Heav'n oppos'd the deed.
Bright Ariel, anxious for his sacred care,
Shoots downward in a veil of thicken'd air;
Mix'd with th' assembly, unperceiv'd he sat,
Directs their thoughts, and guides the Brucian fate.
In secret whispers Heaven's behests conveys,
Breathes in each breast, and all the council sways;
The sacred motion touch'd sly Pembroke's breast,
The peer arose, and thus the king addrest:—
'Sovereign! not Huntington alone must bleed,
'His kindred also must atone the deed:
'Till these are seiz'd, the punishment decline,
'Then wreck your wrath on all the Brucian line.
'His brethren, allies, and his friends must fall,
'And one dire ruin overwhelm them all.
'Tis this you are secure.' The peers assent,
And Edward sullen owns the sentiment;
Nor knows the fix'd eternal voice of fate
Had doom'd him safe, and spoke the hero great:
For him immortal honours had decreed;
And endless glories shed around his head.
Bid him through danger struggle to renown,
And raise the theme of ages not his own.

* Ate signifies guilt. She was the goddess of revenge, discord, ambition, passions so destructive to the human kind. Any reader will easily see the prosopœia, and likewise understand the machinery.

'Twas night, and now the great assembly rose,
Each peer retiring to his late repose.
Not so bright Ariel, his dear charge dismist,
But watchful hovers o'er Montgom'ry's breast;
With tenderness to Bruce's heart he fires,
And to prevent his doom his thoughts inspires:
Bids the soft motion in his bosom roll,
And breathes the friend in whispers to his soul.
Full of the visions of the night, by fear
And love awak'd, up rose the friendly peer.
A faithful servant soon his lord attends,
Whom fraught with presents to the Bruce he sends;
No charge in words the trusty menial bore,
But in his hand a purse of shining ore:
Two glitt'ring spurs of silver polish'd bright,
The certain emblems of a speedy flight.
The charge deliver'd, and the man dismist,
Bruce rolls the mystic message in his breast.
By Heav'n instructed, soon the meaning clears,
Call his attendants, and for flight prepares.
'Twas when bleak Boreas' sullen gusts arise,
And bear the fleecy winter through the skies;
When bellowing clouds descend in spreading snow,
And form a shining wilderness below;
By night the prince, two servants in his train,
On horseback mounting, scours the trackless plain;
But, lest the foe should trace the sudden flight,
Along th' impression on the snowy white;
By secret hands his coursers backward shod,
Elude the search, and falsify the road.
Through dreary shades of night, and tracks of snow,
Where winds and storms in struggling tempests blow;
Where hills and dales, the forest in the field,
One tiresome undistinguish'd prospect yield;
Where roaring torrents roll their wat'ry sway,
The noble Bruce pursues his restless way,
Till past the dangers of the hostile plain,
And the bleak horrors of the wint'ry rain.
Lochmabane's gates a safe retreat afford,
Unfold obsequious, and receive their lord.
By two attendants led, the royal guest,
His great ancestors ancient pavement prest:

There found his brother and Kilpatrick wight,
Fleming and Lindsay, and the * Reaver knight.
His eyes with wonder and confusion mix'd,
On the brave stranger royal Edward fix'd.
He gaz'd astonish'd! then his brother knew,
And wing'd with joy, to his embraces flew:
Each chief salutes his sov'reign in his turn,
And all their hearts with mutual transports burn.
The menials next with victuals load the board,
And chiefs attending entertain their lord.
His hunger soon allay'd, the royal guest
(As men of war are us'd with short repast),
Began his late adventures to relate,
And runs the series of his former fate;
Till sleep approaching, all the chiefs arose
To guard their sov'reign to his soft repose.
Now ope's the wint'ry dawn, and Cynthia's ray
Shoots a dim twilight through the low'ring day,
When loyal friends in bonds a courier bring
Fraught with despatches to the South'ron king,
By Cumming sent. The hardy Edward rose,
And to the king's apartment softly goes.
He found the monarch starting from his bed,
And to his presence soon the captive led.
The man at once produc'd the traitor's writ:
The monarch read, and shudder'd at the sight.
He views, and wonders at the black design,
His eyes, indignant, rolling o'er each line.
The purport bore—To haste the Bruce's fate;
For kings should dread the pop'lar and the great.
Fir'd with revenge, his courser quick he calls,
And furious leaves Lochmabane's ancient walls.
His friends, all ready now, their steads bestrode,
And swiftly follow through the marshy road.
Straight to Dumfries advances all the train,
And find the Cumming in the sacred fane.
Rage and swift vengeance rolling in his breast,
Bruce furious enter'd, and the man address'd:—
'Villain! (meantime he shows the trait'rous scroll,)
'Read this, and learn to hate thy perjur'd soul.'

* The Red Reaver, alias Thomas of Longoville.

No more—but pull'd a poniard from its sheath,
And in his heart deep drove the shining death;
Lord Cumming falls—a tide of crimson gore
Bursts from the wound, and stains the hallow'd floor.
His cousin Edward, hasting to his aid,
Prone at his side by Lindsay's hands is laid;
This done, the Bruce attended by his train,
Swift to Lochmabane measures back the plain:
Thence round his royal manifesto sends,
To warn his subjects and invite his friends:
High rais'd, in gold, the glitt'ring lions glare,
And round the standard crowds the loyal war.
The king appears, his noble mien imparts
Love to their souls, and courage to their hearts;
They view their prince, in arms a glorious name—
And ev'ry breast beats high with future fame.
The monarch mounting, foremost trac'd the plain,
Glitter the royal squadrons in his train.
Straight to imperial Scoon they bend their way,
The sacred seat of Fergus' ancient sway:
When o'er the lawns, as Bruce directs his sight,
A warlike courser bore a sable knight;
His clouded mail a dusky horror shed,
A bloody plume blaz'd nodding o'er his head.
As from some nightly clouds' impregnant womb
The sudden light'ning glares along the gloom:
High on his helm so wav'd the blazy stream,
And o'er his armour cast a double gleam.
In his strong hand a lance he rais'd on high,
And a broad faulcheon glitter'd at his thigh.
Soon as the Bruce the warlike knight beheld,
Foremost he speeds his courser o'er the field;
His beamy spear advancing in his rest,
Aloud he calls, and thus the man addrest:
'Whoe'er thou art in arms that tread'st the plain,
'Disclose thy purpose, thy designs explain.
'Whether a stranger from some foreign soil,
'Thou com'st to view old Caledonia's toil,
'By Heav'n directed from a distant shore,
'To join her loyal sons, and aid her righteous war.
'Or if thou com'st her freedom to oppose,
'Obstruct our right, and to assist our foes;

'Whoe'er thou art, obscure, or known to fame,
'Show thine intentions, and unfold thy name.'
Thus spoke the king, and now the warrior band
Approaching, round the gallant stranger stand.
The courteous knight a low obeisance made,
And thus to royal Bruce submissive said:—
'From foreign climes, and distant tracts of earth,
'I sought the soil where nature gave me birth;
'Long since inform'd of my dear country's woes,
'By home-bred faction torn and foreign foes;
'Arriv'd, with tears I view'd her wasted shore,
'Horrid with slaughter, and deform'd with gore;
'One face of ruin direful spread each plain,
'Her towns in ashes, and her heroes slain;
'I found my much-lov'd sire a captive led,
'In fetters pin'd, and in a dungeon dead;
'Myself bereft of all his wide domains,
'Where now the haughty Clifford proudly reigns.
'Mine Eme addrest th' usurper to regain
'My right paternal, but addrest in vain;
'The suit prefer'd, the tyrant rose in ire,
'And proudly check'd the venerable sire,
'Rejected with disdain, and dispossest,
'What grief and rage indignant tore my breast?
'Full of my country's wrongs, mine own disgrace,
'I vow'd revenge on all the South'ron race.
'Just as the motion in my bosom roll'd,
'A loyal friend in joyful whispers told,
'The noble Bruce escap'd pursu'd his way,
'T' assert his title to the Scotish sway.
'Rous'd with the thought, I arm, and soon prepare,
'To join my prince, and aid the loyal war.
'If thou'rt that Bruce, and those thy martial bands,
'A faithful subject waits thy just commands.
'A stranger I, a youth unknown to fame,
'But loyal Douglas was my father's name.'
The Bruce well knowing what the sire had done,
Flew to the embraces of the gallant son,
Close in his arms the godlike man he prest,
And all the train salute the noble guest.
Thence to imperial Scoon they bend their way,
The far-fam'd seat of Albion's ancient sway.

Arriv'd, they enter, guards surrounding wait,
Whilst Bruce is seated on a throne of state.
Then from the altar of the hallow'd fane,
The sacred officers the rites began.
The regal oil, first plac'd by pious hands,
In holy vases on the altar stands;
The tuneful choir their solemn voices raise,
And Heav'n resounds the consecrated lays.
The royal fragrance on his head they pour,
In od'rous drops descends the hallow'd show'r.
Of gold and jewels next th' imperial crown,
(A dazzling radiance!) round his temples shone;
Meanwhile the chiefs, and the attending train,
Intently gazing on the awful scene,
With wonder saw a flame, innoxious, spread
Its lamentable glories round the monarch's head;
Amaz'd, beheld unusual splendours rise;
Play o'er his face, and sparkle in his eyes.
Again the choir their notes in concert join,
Warbles the heav'nly anthem thro' the shrine,
The crowd in peals of loud applauses rise,
And catch'd, from vault to vault the echoing noise
Rolls thro' the dome, and rattles in the skies.
The rites perform'd, attended by his train,
The sacred monarch leaves the hallow'd fane.
To rooms of state ascends the royal guest,
Where boards stood loaded with a rich repast.
Gay sparkling bowls the various banquet cheer,
And music's charms again suspend the ear.
The royal repast done, succeeds the ball,
And Caledonia's beauties grace the hall;
In rich attire attend their gen'rous prince,
And in bright measures lead the num'rous dance;
Now night, once more, the boards with goblets crown'd,
Long live the king in ev'ry glass goes round;
Round from repeated bowls rich nectar flows,
Till drowsy slumbers summon to repose.
The rising beams glow on the verge of day,
And o'er old ocean's heaving bosom play.
The noble Bruce imperial Scoon forsakes,
To Bertha's tow'rs a royal journey takes,

With him fierce Edward issues to the plain,
Lennox the bold, and Athole's hardy thane.
Randolph and Hay, two thunderbolts of war;
Seaton and Boyd to guard their prince prepare.
The daring Sommerville in armour shines,
And hardy Fraser his battalion joins:
Inchmartin, Barclay, on the field appear,
And doughty Douglas glitter'd in the rear.
Five hundred spears advance in bright array,
Gleam o'er the lawns, and doubly gild the day.
In Bertha's tow'rs the crafty Pembroke stay'd,
And twice ten hundred his command obey'd.
Before the town, then girt with walls around,
The king approaching marks the proper ground.
Near to the works encamp'd the squadrons lay;
Commission'd thence two trumpets take their way;
Straight to the gates the martial heralds came,
Requir'd the place in good King Robert's name;
Summon'd the haughty Pembroke soon to yield,
Or bravely meet their master in the field.
The chief, indignant, hears the bold alarm,
Deigns no reply, but bids the legions arm;
Throughout the troops the leader's orders run,
And quick in arms the warlike South'ron shone.
Back to the camp the heralds soon repair,
And bid the monarch for their fight prepare.
The Scots hear from the walls the loud alarms,
The echoing trumpets, and the din of arms.
Repairs each leader to his fix'd command,
And rang'd in firm array the legions stand.
The king on horseback views th' embattled lines,
Then dauntless at the head in armour shines,
Ready to sally, now, the South'ron train,
The gates unfolding, hasten to the plain:
When lo! a chief before the ranks appears,
Grave were his looks, and rev'rend were his years;
In ev'ry martial art precisely skill'd,
Deep at the board, and daring in the field!
Sir Ingram Omphraville, well known to fame,
In peace and war a venerable name.
The issuing troops his awful presence stay'd,
And thus the chief to haughty Pembroke said:—

'High from the walls I view'd yon level strand,
'Where Scots array'd in firm battalia stand,
'Compar'd to us, a small, but dauntless train,
'Inur'd to blood, and harden'd to the plain;
'Their country's love a gen'rous warmth imparts,
'Arms their intrepid hands, and steels their hearts.
'See! round the ranks great Bruce exerts his care,
'Cheers ev'ry bosom, and inflames the war;
'Full of his sire! his sire well known of old,
'In council subtile, and in action bold:
'These other chiefs oft have I seen before
'Thunder thro' death, and sweep the bloody shore.
'Glory and liberty their bosoms fill,
'And ev'ry captain boasts a gen'ral's skill,
'Greater our numbers, but yon hardy train,
'Long us'd to war, are matchless on a plain.
'Therefore, my lord, the doubtful field delay,
'And promise battle the succeeding day.
'Cautious, meantime, surprise the Scots by slight,
'Secure and guardless 'midst the shades of night.'
Assents the leader, and the troops recalls;
Sudden proclaims a trumpet from the walls,
This night each army to their rest repair,
And let to-morrow's sun decide the war.
He said. The Scots, part on the field abode,
And part to Methven's neighb'ring forest rode.
In soft repose to lull each anxious care,
Thoughtless of danger, undisturb'd by fear.
Now Cynthia, silent, shades a silver light,
Gilds the blue expanse, and adorns the night;
The planets round in various orbits roll,
Glows with unnumber'd fires the spangled pole;
A solemn horror settles on the woods,
And deeper roll the murmurs of the floods.
Late to their rest retire the lab'ring swains,
And silence o'er the face of nature reigns.
'Twas now the South'ron chiefs for fight prepare,
And from the walls lead forth th' embattl'd war;
The wavy lances shoot a beamy light,
And doubly gild the glories of the night.
To Methven, where the Scots securely lay,
The crafty leaders shape their silent way,

Swift as they march'd, by chance a watchful knight,
Descries the squadrons thro' the gleamy night.
Sudden he hastes to rouse the slumb'ring crowd,
By that sly Omphraville attacks the wood;
The hardy king had scarce his banner cry'd,
When Pembroke thunder'd at the forest side;
The narrow forest no defence could yield,
Then rush'd the daring monarch to the field:
The Scotish chiefs to guard the standard ran,
Furious commenc'd the combat on the plain.
Together fast the battle grimly goes,
Loud to the skies the thick'ning clamours rose.
From forged steel thick flash'd the streamy light,
Mix'd with the air, and blaz'd along the night;
The doughty king aloud his banner cries,
And furious 'midst the thicket squadrons flies.
His burnish'd brand was heavy, sharp, and long:
With ireful force he hew'd amidst the throng.
Thro' shining armour bursts the crimson gore,
And a red deluge floats along the shore.
The chiefs advance their sovereign to sustain,
And haughty Pembroke meets the loyal train.
Fierce with a shout the hosts together bound,
Trembles the forest, and the skies resound.
A waste of ruin round the field is spread,
And heaps on heaps lie roll'd the mangl'd dead.
The noble king exerts his awful might,
And Edward's fury flam'd amidst the fight.
There Sommerville dealt round his deadly blows,
And doughty Douglas thunder'd on his foes.
Bold Lennox here, there Athole's hardy band
Pour on the front, and sweep the dreadful strand.
Pembroke, with grief, their awful force beheld,
His troops all broke and reeling in the field;
Unable to sustain their martial fire,
Dismay'd he stood, and ready to retire;
When Omphraville (the Scotish commons won),
And Moubray on the rear a charge begun.
This Pembroke saw, and soon his pow'r recalls,
And with fresh vigour in the front assails,
The Scots o'erpower'd, and on the point to yield,
With rage and grief, the glorious king beheld.

Aloud his royal banner calls again,
And fiercely rushes on th' opposing train.
Through all the ranks he scatters death around,
Red roll the crimson torrents o'er the ground.
To save his friends, and to secure the state,
What wonders wrought he in the dire debate!
But vain the thought, thus singly to sustain
The war's whole tide and fury of the plain.
Urg'd in the front, encompass'd on the rear,
His fainting squadrons all for flight prepare;
Their foes no longer able to withstand,
Diverse they fled, and left the bloody strand.
Randolph and Sommerville proud Pembroke bore,
Inchmartin, Barclay, captives from the shore.
And Fraser, long for martial deeds renown'd,
And other chiefs the South'ron triumph crown'd:
The hardy Moubray rushing o'er the strand,
Had seiz'd the Bruce's bridle in his hand;
Loud to the legions the bold warrior cries,
Haste to my aid, mine is the royal prize.
But daring Seaton sees the captive prince,
And sudden rushes to his lord's defence;
High in his right, he bore a flaming brand,
On Moubray's helm the thick'ning blows descend;
'Till bent beneath his force, he quits the rein,
And reels and staggers, stunn'd, along the plain:
The king, thus rescu'd, from the battle fled,
And South'ron chiefs to Perth their captives led.
Despatch'd, a courier speeds o'er Solway's shore,
And Pembroke's letter to great Edward bore.
Joyful he reads the action on the plain,
The Bruce's rout, the captives, and the slain;
Each pris'ner soon a barb'rous death enjoins,
But the wise leader baulks his lord's designs.
His crafty speeches their intentions try'd,
And bounty fix'd them to the hostile side;
Their lives he granted, liberty restor'd,
And ev'n young Randolph own'd a South'ron lord.
The commons all a joint obedience yield,
Dismay'd and routed in the bloody field,
Forsake their homage since the fatal strife,
And meanly barter liberty for life.

The noble monarch thus by fraud o'erthrown,
His hopes near ruin'd, and his succours gone.
To mountains, wilds, and deserts, now repairs,
To shun the dangers of surrounding wars.
Edward attends him on his lonely way,
Athole, and Douglas, and the loyal Hay,
Campbell and Haliburton with him ride,
Names all devoted to the righteous side,
Three hundred peasants gath'ring to their lord,
A weak but voluntary aid afford.
'Midst barren rocks, and unfrequented ways,
The royal outlaw spends his irksome days.
Wild roots his hunger, and his thirst allay'd,
The friendly stream that through the valley stray'd;
Green moss by night affords his homely bed,
'Midst the dark forest's hospitable shade,
Thus lonely wander'd, overset with pow'r,
The royal exile on his native shore,
Till pinch'd with cold and want, the feeble train,
Their toils no longer able to sustain:
Where fair Devana's friendly fortress lay,
Through roads uncooth direct their secret way;
Thither the queen and beauteous ladies came,
Brave Neil attending on the royal dame.
* Devana! boasted seat of arts divine,
Renown'd by Phœbus, and the sacred nine!
With all th' immortal stores of science grac'd,
The spoils of Rome, and trophies of the east;
Since driv'n by barbarous bands th' harmonious maids,
From Thespian bow'rs, and from the Latin shades,
By Phœbus' care conducted o'er the main,
Of old arriv'd on the † Tæzalian plain;
Near where the Don, fam'd for her scaly brood,
Her tide disgorges in the Grampian flood,
A fabric stands, whose gilded tow'rs on high
Rear'd into diadems, invade the sky:
Here meets th' Albanian prince the tuneful choir,
And hails the patron of the tuneful lyre;
Conducts the muses to the gay retreat,
Assigns their mansion, and confirms their seat.

* New Aberdeen, situated towards the mouth of the river Dee.
† The people of Mar, Buchan, and all about Aberdeen.

O much lov'd seat! nurse of my tender days,
Accept this humble tribute of my lays:
So may each art and science grace thy halls,
And wealth and splendour still adorn thy walls:
May ev'ry muse and ev'ry grace be thine,
As love and gratitude shall still be mine.
The duteous sons shall sing thy glorious round,
And Dona's banks repeat the pleasing sound:
To ev'ry lyre the rural powers shall crowd,
The sylvan gods and naiads of the flood,
With raptures list'ning to the song divine,
Inspir'd by Phœbus and the sacred nine.
Let Helicon his fountain boast no more,
Nor Tiber glory in his vocal shore;
Ye Greek and Latin springs resign your fame,
Now lost in Dona's consecrated stream.
Within the neighb'ring walls the monarch lay,
Liv'd on delight, and lov'd the hours away.
The other chiefs, amidst their comforts charms,
Forget their toils, and lull the din of arms.
Short their delights. From all th' adjacent lands,
And neighb'ring strengths, arose the South'ron bands.
Assemble to the war the gath'ring pow'rs,
And join and thicken to Devana's tow'rs.
The king appriz'd, nor able to sustain
Th' unequal force, withdraws his little train.
From Deva's shores to Avon's spacious source,
The royal bands remensurate their course.
There rode the queen, and all the lovely fair,
'Midst barren climes, expos'd to bleaky air.
Near where M'Dougal held his savage sway,
The monarch with his thin battalions lay;
M'Dougal, nephew to the Cumming slain,
Fir'd with revenge, advances to the plain.
A thousand shields approaching to the fight,
Dart from their bossy orbs a glimm'ring light.
The hardy king near to a forest stands,
And to array calls forth his faithful bands;
Three hundred lances glitter in the air,
Move into ranks, and wait the barb'rous war.
Swift as their native does, the hostile train,
Arm'd with fell axes, bounding to the plain,

By fierce M'Dougal violently led,
On Bruce's host a furious onset made.
Ye gods! how dire, how dreadful was the fray?
How fierce the charge, how obstinate the day?
The bold M'Dougal's troops, a barb'rous crowd,
Inur'd to rapine, and bred up to blood;
Like wolves untam'd, or like the mountain boar,
Their fury on the royal squadrons pour,
And with fell axes mow the bloody shore.
'Twas here the noble king was hard essay'd,
At once his courage, force, and conduct try'd;
He mark'd the fury of the barb'rous host,
And saw his friends bestrew the sanguine coast:
With grief beheld the havoc of the day,
Ev'n Douglas bleeding, and the gallant Hay.
He felt his soul pierc'd with the tender sight,
And call'd forth all the wonders of his might.
Awful in ire, his banner cry'd aloud,
And rush'd resistless on the savage crowd;
Thro' the crush'd war with dreadful force he broke,
Trembl'd the nodding forest at the shock,
As when some furious whirlwind sweeps the plain,
Sounds thro' the skies, and settles on the main;
Mix'd in black tempests rising billows roll,
Roars the vex'd ocean, and resounds the pole.
Thus far'd the monarch 'midst the adverse band,
Thus burn'd the thick'ning combat on the strand.
The barb'rous foe, stopt in their bloody course,
Stood still and gaz'd, astonish'd at his force.
While pour'd in torrents roll the savage gore,
And ten score axes strew the crimson shore:
Ev'n fierce M'Dougal dreads the monarch's might,
Yet fir'd with rage still animates the fight.
Meantime the queen, and all the lovely crowd,
From the thick covert of the shady wood,
Viewing the fury of each adverse train,
And all the various terrors of the plain,
Amaz'd and trembling at the face of war,
Thus to the heav'ns their ardent vows prefer:
Thou! at whose voice divine the thunders roll,
And shake the solid basis of the pole;
Whose dreadful nod ev'n gods and men obey,
Thou sole, thou sacred rector of the sky!

To our joint vows thine ear propitious bend,
And thine anointed from his foes defend:
Bear him, thou mighty arbiter of fate,
Far from the fury of the dire debate;
Or crush the hostile war, and drive yon band,
Dismay'd and wither'd from the bloody strand:
The monarch's labours crown, reward his toils,
And bid him triumph in the rebel spoils.
They said, and Heav'n assents to half the pray'r,
The half rejects, and mingles with the air.
Just as the foe again for fight prepare,
Range in fierce ranks, and recommence the war.
The king, with wisdom as with valour grac'd,
His bands assembling, thus the chiefs addrest:—
'You see yon bloody rebel animates his train,
'His squadron rallies, and renews the plain,
'Num'rous their troops, and well with weapons stor'd,
'A brutal people, with a savage lord;
'Stock'd with provisions in their native soil,
'We pinch'd with famine, and fatigu'd with toil;
'Suffice it, then, we once have check'd their course,
'Their fury blunted, and repell'd their force;
'Nor let us further tempt our doubtful fate,
'But save our friends, and cautiously retreat.
'Renown'd the chiefs, whose souls undaunted dare
'Face the stern day, and meet the front of war;
'Can slaughter in each hideous form disdain,
'Thunder thro' fate, and sweep the ghastly plain;
'The hero lives exalted into fame,
'Nor less the glory of that leader's name,
'Who prest with odds, can check his martial sire,
'Elude the foe, and cautiously retire.'
Thus spoke the king: and soon in just array
Retreat the legions from th' unequal day;
The hostile squadrons for the chace prepare,
But the bold monarch sternly guards the rear.
Douglas and Hay, and all the chieftains stand
In arm, an iron bulwark! on the strand;
Till by degrees retiring from the field,
The loyal troops had gain'd the woody bield;
His hopes all blasted, and his purpose crost,
To Lorn M'Dougal reconducts his host.

Thus to the wood the king and chief repair,
Safe from the noise and danger of the war,
There found the queen, and all the charming train,
And in their lovely arms forget their pain;
By their soft hands each scar and bleeding wound,
With studious care is tented, bath'd, and bound;
Not Phœbus self, God of the healing art,
Could half so swift, so sov'reign ease impart.
Her dittany no longer Crete shall boast,
No more Arabia vaunt her balmy coast;
The fair physicians speedier aid afford,
Their touch was med'cine, and their lips restor'd.
The weary chiefs, secure from dire alarms,
Feed on their eyes, and live upon their charms;
In pleasing dialogues consume the light,
And melt in softer ecstasies the night.

Now late in ocean bath'd th' autumnal star
Rears his red orb, and shoots a keener glare,
Around his breath in sultry vapours flies,
Glows the parched earth, and flame the middle skies.
Long had the host consumed their irksome time
'Midst barb'rous foes, and in a horrid clime
By hunger driv'n, pursu'd the hunter's toil,
O'er craggy cliffs, and through a desert soil;
Spoil'd all the forests of their savage game,
Ransack'd each den, and pillag'd ev'ry stream.
Now spent with labour much, with famine more,
At last prepare to quit the rugged shore.
'Bove all, the royal dame, and beauteous train,
Strange to the hardships of a rough campaign;
By hunger pinch'd, and round with foes beset,
Resolv'd to flee and tempt their future fate,
The king and chiefs their consorts sorrows shar'd,
Mourn'd their declining strength, and charms impair'd;
With boding hearts the lovely fair embrac'd,
And bath'd in tears, the sad departure haste.
The noble Neil, and Athole's loyal thane,
Direct the way, and guide the lovely train.

On Dona's fertile banks a fortress stood,
Stupendous pile, the labour of some god.
Held by the father of the royal dame,
Impregnable, Kildrummy is its name.

Thither the watchful chiefs with loyal care,
Thro' wilds and paths unknown conduct the fair,
There at their ease the tender beauties rest,
But still the monarch labours in their breast.
The monarch: who meantime, thro' hills and dales,
'Midst barren rocks and solitary vales,
With fates adverse, with cold and famine's pains,
Superior strives, and heav'n his soul sustains.
How deep the counsels of th' eternal mind;
Man's thoughts how stinted, and his views how blind?
Far in the womb of causes fix'd on high,
Events in regular confusion lie;
Till heaven shall by degrees each link unloose,
And step by step our future fate disclose;
Not man, but angels, shall explore in vain,
The winding order of the mystic chain;
Mortals, obedient to th' eternal nod,
Must hope and suffer, and attend their God.
Thus long the monarch struggl'd with his fate,
Glorious in patience, and resign'dly great;
Means and events he weigh'd with proper care,
In counsel wise, and terrible in war;
Through ev'ry scene, in ev'ry act sedate,
Bold to attack, and cautious to retreat;
No toil refusing for the state's defence,
A loving father and a gen'rous prince.
Thus long, illustrious, in distress he lay,
And spent in mountain wastes his tedious hours away:
Nor durst, sore pinch'd with want, the loyal pow'r
Forsake the heights, or tempt the campaign shore.
Now autumn past, approach'd the wint'ry sway,
And night's black shades usurp'd upon the day;
The gath'ring clouds descending from on high,
Lour fraught with storms, and threaten in the sky.
The north's chill breath comes keener o'er the plain,
And sharper thriller scuds the thicken'd rain.
The noble Bruce unable now to bear,
Amidst a desert clime, th' inclement year,
His legions warns, resolving to retreat,
And in Cantyre to tempt his future fate.
Meanwhile, before the gen'rous Campbell sends
To view the country, and apprise his friends,

Then to Lochlomond march the loyal band,
And find a crazy birlin on the strand.
They launch the boat, and pair by pair the host,
In twice twelve hours attain the farther coast.
The hungry legions scour the desert lawns,
Beat round the woods, and rouse the nimble fawns.
Bold Lennox hears, amaz'd the mingl'd sounds
Of cheering horns about, and op'ning hounds.
Lennox, who here, since Methven's fatal strife,
On roots and savage game sustain'd his life.
He knew the king, and warn'd his little pow'r,
And joyful meets him near the briny shore;
At once the monarch and the chiefs drew near,
And, courteous, hail and hug the royal peer.
The loyal peer supplies the host with food,
The mountain goats and product of the wood.
Of toils and dangers past, the various tale
Mutual diverts, and cheers the welcome meal;
The repast ended, rose the royal train,
And hasted to the margin of the main.
By this had faithful Campbell gain'd the land,
And ships with victuals fraught obscur'd the strand.
The joyful host soon launch into the deep,
And lab'ring oars the foamy billows sweep.
Th' Hebridian chief, who stretch'd his ample reign,
Wide o'er the daughters of the western main,
The monarch welcomes to the friendly coast,
And gen'rous entertains the loyal host.
Three days they rested, and then put to sea,
And to Raclinda plough'd the liquid way;
Raclinda's boors their ready aid afford,
Receive with joy, and own their righteous lord;
Gladly supply the troops with needful store,
A friendly race, an hospitable shore.
Thro' the bleak season here the monarch stay'd,
Obscure, and fame around proclaim'd him dead.
Meanwhile, his foes assemble all their bands,
Harrass his kindred, and ransack their lands,
No diff'rence put 'twixt sacred and profane,
And ev'n the hallow'd mitre plead in vain;
Glasgow's old loyal venerable sire,
In bonds and dungeons felt the factious ire.

The noble Seaton, ever dear to fame,
A godlike patriot, and a spotless name,
By factious treason in Lochdown betray'd,
And to Augusta's hostile tow'rs convey'd:
For Scotia's sake resign'd his gallant breath,
Great in his life, and glorious in his death.
Seaton! thou brave, thou ever loyal name,
How the muse warms with the exalted theme.
Let Rome no more her fam'd preservers boast,
Camillus, Curii, and the Fabian host,
Old Albion in her Seatons vaunts her odds,
A race of heroes rising into gods.
The royal dame, beset with trait'rous pow'r,
Forsakes Kildrummy, and the faithless shore.
Northward she fled, but Rossia's rebel thane,
Betray'd ungenerous the female train,
Convey'd them captive to Augusta's tow'rs,
To waste, confin'd their melancholy hours.
  To assail Kildrummy, South'rons next prepare,
And young Caernarvon heads the num'rous war.
Great Gloucester, the youthful leader joins,
And 'midst his squadrons hardy Hertford shines:
In broad array the legions sweep along,
And round the walls dispose the warlike throng;
Each gate young Edward views, each pass secures,
And storms of batt'ries rattle on the tow'rs:
But gallant Neil, and Athole's hardy thane,
Repel the fury of the hostile train.
In vain an iron tempest round them flies,
And shocks of engines thunder through the skies;
Their noble breasts no sense of danger palls,
Each soul undaunted, as unmov'd the walls.
Tir'd with the fruitless task, the impatient prince
His sire admonish'd of the bold defence;
The haughty sire soon arms his awful pow'r,
And onward speeds to Solway's sandy shore.
Fond man! unconscious of thy mortal date,
How blind to that last swift approach of fate!
In vain thou seest thy steely legions glare,
And triumph'st in the pomp of impious war;
In thy fond heart proud conquest vainly reigns,
And lust of lawless pow'r thy bosom stains,

In vain oppressive sway thy breast inspires;
Behold the period of thy vast desires!
Sudden thou feel'st thy latest minutes roll,
And in a paltry hut expires thy soul.
Pride and ambition hand thee down to fame,
And tyranny sits black upon thy name.
Not so when once, 'gainst unbelieving foes,
Flam'd thy dread faulcheon in the sacred cause;
When Antioch saw thee thunder on the shore,
And Syrian streams run red with Pagan gore.
'Twas then bright trophies to thy name arose,
And bays unfading grac'd thy awful brows.
Now lawless might and fraud the scene o'ercast,
Whither thy laurels, and thy triumphs blast;
Now, unlamented, thou resign'st thy breath,
The hate of life and ridicule of death.

Meanwhile the Scots maintain Kildrummy's tow'rs,
And darts and jav'lins mix in iron show'rs.
High in their glitt'ring arms the chiefs appear,
And from the walls annoy the hostile war.
Impregnable the mighty fortress stands,
And braves the force of all the South'ron bands.
Vex'd at the vain attack, the prince recalls
His troops, just ready to forsake the walls;
When suddenly a mighty flame he spies
Burst from the roof, and crackle in the skies.
Accurst contrivance! a perfidious Scot
Had in a sacred tower the treason wrought;
At this the prince again his squadron forms,
And with fresh force the flaming fortress storms.
Betrayed the brave defendants, and amaz'd,
With tears upon the spreading mischief gaz'd;
No longer equal to the dire dispute,
Assail'd by fire within, by foes without,
Their hopes extinguish'd, the provisions lost,
On terms surrender to the South'ron host.
But haughty Edward, who no terms observ'd,
Some hang'd, some quarter'd, some in prison starv'd;
The chiefs, brave Neil and Athole, long renown'd,
Their fate amidst a thousand torments found.

And now Caernarvon and his bands retire,
To pay the last sad duties to his sire.

The court expecting on the border-strand,
Welcome the monarch to his native land;
Peers, prelates, generals, knights, a splendid train,
Sumptuous attend, and aid the solemn scene;
To Westminster in sable pomp proceed,
Yawns the deep marble, and receives the dead;
The sire's last rites perform'd, his royal son,
The young Caernarvon mounts the South'ron throne.
Meantime brave Bruce on Rauchlin's rugged shores,
Patient consumes the winter's bleaky hours,
Not knowing ought of the lowlands state,
His captive queen, and mighty Edward's fate.
Nor fame had yet o'er these wild mountains spread,
Kildrummy sack'd, and his lov'd brother dead.
Unknowing and unknown, his days he past,
Far on a horrid, unregarded coast.
But Douglas weary of the dull delay,
The vain spent night, and the inactive day;
The martial youth aspiring now to fame,
To prove his worth, and to assert his name,
Could brook no longer this inglorious rest,
And thus, impatient, the bold Boyd addrest:—
'How long, my friend, thus idly shall we moan
'Our fortune's ruin'd, and the state undone?
'How long shall Albion's unrelenting foes,
'Feed on her spoils, and triumph in her woes,
'While thus her cause her sons like cowards yield,
'Nor dare assert her in the gen'rous field?
'Forbid it, Heaven! nor let the Douglas' fame
'Sink in a dastard's son's inglorious name.
'No; like my sires, I'll seek the dire debate,
'Meet the brave day, and court the face of fate;
'Henceforth this anxious soul shall know no rest,
'No ease these limbs, no peace this lab'ring breast:
'Till Albion, free from force of foreign bands,
'And from her impious sons more barb'rous hands,
'Shall in her pomp of ancient splendour rise,
'Her glory fill the earth, and reach the distant skies:
'Till Bruce, succeeding to his right divine,
'Shall add new lustre to great Fergus' line.'
He said. And Boyd assented as he spoke,
And of the king a sudden leave they took.

Swift from the rough Raclinda's steepy bay,
Launch the bold chiefs, and sweep the wat'ry way,
Fly o'er the whit'ning surface of the main,
And land on Arran's coast their little train;
Long had the isle obey'd the South'ron pow'r,
And Hastings govern'd on the rocky shore.
In Brodwick fortress lay the hostile band,
When Boyd and Douglas gain'd the barren strand,
The Scots withdrew, and in close ambush lay,
Far in a thicket on a scroggy bay.
Just as the deputy the galleys brought
With arms and with provisions richly fraught,
The mariners their vessels quickly moor,
As quick the Scottish chief array their pow'r;
The servants led the victuals from the main,
Mov'd the stuff'd waggons o'er the beachy plain;
When all amaz'd, the caravan beheld
The hardy Scots in order take the field.
As when some lion couching on the lawn,
Views from the rocky cliff the sportive fawn;
The lordly savage shoots along the way,
Bounds from the steep, and tears his trembling prey;
Then Douglas, furious, rush'd amidst the foe,
And twenty deaths the sea beat level strow:
The artful Boyd his needless aid restrain'd,
But spoil'd th' attendants, and the victuals gain'd;
By this bold Hastings hears the warlike noise,
And ireful to his friends' assistance flies.
The doughty Douglas spies th' approaching band,
And sudden hastes to meet them near the briny strand;
But when the haughty South'ron chief beheld
The daring foe thus dauntless take the field;
Superior yet he dreads the Douglas might,
And back to Brodwick wins his coward flight.
Brave Douglas to the walls pursues in vain,
Strong was the fort, and few the Scotish train.
The chief returning finds the hostile store,
And faithful Boyd attending on the shore;
Then in the covert of a shady wood,
The Scots themselves and all the prey bestow'd.
Ten days were past, when Bruce embarks his host,
And swiftly launches from Raclinda's coast,

Furnish'd with needful stores, the royal train
In thirty galleys plow the wat'ry plain:
On Arran's rocky isle direct they bore,
And gales propitious waft them to the shore.
There rose a hamlet on a rugged bay,
Thither the king and chieftains bent their way;
Enter'd a paultry inn, and quick demand
What strangers late had trode the barren strand:
Up rose a female, and the monarch led
Where Boyd and Douglas held the forest shade.
Then Bruce his horn inspires, the veh'ment blast
Rings through the wood, and floats along the coast.
Alarm'd, the leaders, at the well known sound,
With eager haste from out the thicket bound.
Joyful salute the king, and then relate,
The Warden's foil, and their first prosp'rous fate.
Thence to the inn, trace back the winding shore,
And menial lead along the rifled store.
Rich South'ron victuals load the homely board,
And Boyd and Douglas entertain their lord.
Next all the army share a large repast:
Glad was the king, and merry was the host.
Now ceas'd keen Boreas freezing breath to flow,
And streams unbound, in grateful murmurs flow;
No more thro' low'ring skies mix'd tempests reign,
Nor angry surges swell the sounding main.
Smile all the meads, and blossom all the groves,
And the wing'd songsters chant their tender loves.
The various beauties of the spring appear,
And gentle zephyrs fan the genial year.
The noble king three days in Arran's isle,
Refresh'd his troops, and rested from his toil.
Now tir'd of ease, his thoughts on Carrick bends,
And thither soon a faithful courier sends:
Bids him, attentive, view the country o'er,
Practise with caution, and their faith explore;
If friendly—on the coast a fire must blaze,
Th' undoubted signal of a loyal race.
The messenger obeys, and quits the strand,
And swift arrives on Bruce's native land.
The peasants tries, but finds them as he goes,
All sworn to South'ron, all the monarch's foes.

Yet, or by chance, or fraud, 'tis hard to say,
The blaze appear'd upon the appointed day.
The careful king beholds the rising gleam,
And to the leaders points the distant flame.
But whilst the sailors, at their lord's command,
Unmoor the fleet, and clear the crowded strand,
The host is bent beneath a load of years,
Before the monarch on the beach appears:
Time on her brows in wrinkled furrows sat,
But deep her counsels, and her words were fate.
Some secret pow'r her lab'ring bosom sway'd,
Her bristled hair rose horrid round her head,
Foaming she stares, her eye-balls wildly roll,
As Bruce's fate came full upon her soul;
Her words, in more than mortal sounds unfold,
Long fix'd decrees and oracles of old,
While thus—'Hail mighty prince, pursue thy way,
'Thro' toil to glory, and unbounded sway.
'Descended of an ancient druid, I
'Feel future scenes, and labour with the sky.
'Long shalt thou struggle in the dire debate,
'Combat distresses, and contend with fate:
'Ev'n now I see thee sweating on the shore,
'And the red field distain'd with running gore;
'I see a hero now amidst our foes,
'Whose soul misled, still loves the loyal cause,
'By subtile art to South'ron homage brought,
'Rise on neglect, and conquer by his fault;
'I see a knight, from hostile regions far,
'Great in his wrongs approach to aid thy war.
'The injur'd exile * combats with disdain,
'And glory crowns him on a foreign plain.
'I see yon sable chief amidst the crowd,
'All grim with dust, and stain'd with future blood.
'Ere yet eternal slumber seal thine eyes,
'Ere yet thy soul shall mount its kindred skies,
'To him I hear thy latest breath impart
'The pious charge of thine untainted heart:
'Pure from thy breast enchas'd in shining ore,
'To bear the relique to the sacred shore.

* The ancestor of the present Duke of Hamilton. His name was Gilbert Hampton, descended (as many say) of the family of Leicester.

'I see the hero eager to fulfil
'The last great mandate of the sov'reign's will,
'Around encompass'd by a warlike throng,
'And join'd by Sinclair and the gallant Young,
'In Tay's broad channel hoist his swelling sails,
'Waft o'er the brine, and reach Iberia's vales.
'I see him there oppose his manly breast
'To swarming legions from the swarthy east *,
'All bath'd in blood, upon the distant shore,
'I see him thunder thro' the Pagan war;
'I see whole nations fall beneath his hand,
'And Osman's millions choke th' Iberian strand.
'But now his courage into rashness grows,
'And, flush'd with success, he disdains his foes:
'Too far incautious, tempts the treach'rous plain,
'O'erborn by armies, and by armies slain.
'More I could name of ancient loyal blood,
'But see—thy fleet already stems the flood;
'Go then to glory, patient trace thy way,
'Till once shall dawn the bright immortal day;
'When one brave field shall all thy labours crown,
'And earth and skies shall echo thy renown;
'And, to confirm the fate, I now declare,
'Mine own two sons shall all thy dangers share;
'Attend thy toils, 'till the great task is done,
'And fate have fix'd the Bruce on Fergus' ancient throne.'

Thus far the prophetess, and bent her way
Back to the inn; the monarch put to sea.
The labouring oars the heaving billows sweep,
Bound the swift vessels o'er the hoary deep.
At last they gain the Bruce's native land,
And the moor'd galleys cloud the oozy strand.
Dejected on the beach appear'd the squire,
Before commission'd to erect the fire.
He told the monarch all was hostile ground,
And that bold Piercy rul'd the country round.

* This was about the end of the 13th century, when those expeditions of the Christian princes (commonly called the Cruisade), in order to recover the holy land out of the hands of the infidels, were hottest, James Douglas having been enjoined to carry the king's heart to the holy sepulchre, hearing, in his passage by the coast of Spain, that the Saracens were very numerous, and prevailed exceedingly there, immediately landed, engaged, and defeated them in several battles. At last, growing too confident of his success, he fell into an ambuscade, and was slain.

Three hundred South'rons waited his command,
Himself the sov'reign tyrant of the land;
Then ask'd the monarch how he dar'd to raise
Upon a hostile coast the trait'rous blaze?
The man deny'd, nor knew he how it came,
Nor durst extinguish the deceitful flame.
Then thus the king accosts the council round,
'Or shall we venture on the faithless ground?
'Or silent shall we quit the dang'rous plain,
'Unmoor our fleet, and measure back the main?'
To this the fiery Edward first reply'd,
'No dread shall drive me back unto the tide;
'Let thousands meet our hundreds on the strand,
'Resolv'd I'll venture on the rebel land.'
The monarch smil'd, the chiefs the sentence own,
March the bold squadrons to the neghb'ring town;
'Twas night, and all secure the South'rons slept,
No dangers dreaded, and no watches kept.
Diverse the Scots to distant quarters go,
And fierce with shouts assail the drowsy foe;
Break splint'ring bars, and burst opposing doors,
And with red torrents sudden stain the floors.
The air around mix'd groans and clamours bears,
And mournful accents reach Lord Piercy's ears:
But safe in Turnberry fortress Piercy lay,
Nor durst approach or mingle in the fray.
Alone M'Dougal, * who betray'd before,
The monarch's brothers to the South'ron pow'r,
An ancient traitor, 'scaped by sudden flight,
Unknown, and favour'd by the shades of night.
Before the sun arose to gild the day,
Drench'd in their gore three hundred South'rons lay:
Next Turnb'rry castle the bold monarch view'd,
But then impregnable the fortress stood;
Two days Lord Piercy lurk'd within the walls,
And on the third a faithful courier calls.
Straight to Northumberland his orders sends,
To warn his friends, and raise his native bands;
Northumbrian pow'rs the courier soon alarms,
And sudden shone a thousand men in arms.

* This was not M'Dougal of Lorn, but one Duncan M'Dougal of Galloway, who had betrayed Thomas and Alexander Bruce, the king's brothers, to the English.

But Gaudifer de Lyle, an ancient knight,
Who knew the Scotish chiefs and Bruce's might,
Dissuades his vassals from a march so far,
Propounds the danger, and deters the war.
The folly shows to seek in their own soil
An host experienc'd, and innur'd to toil.
The troops dishearten'd would have quit the shore,
But hardy St. John animates the pow'r.
By him conducted soon arrive the host,
And guard Lord Piercy to his native coast.
Secret they march'd, resolving not to fight,
For now the South'ron fear'd the monarch's might.
  Meantime, secure the Scots in Carrick lay,
And all the region own'd their sov'reign's sway;
The king at leisure view'd the country round,
And mark'd the ruins of his native ground;
As Phœbus once declining to the sea,
Glow'd on the margin of Hesperian day,
Along the pleasing vales the monarch stray'd,
And Boyd and Douglas clos'd his royal side.
Far on the lawns a warlike troop they spy'd,
And at their head a nymph her charms display'd;
Advanc'd the loyal fair with easy grace,
The monarch's cousin of Clackmannan's race.
Approaching, the bright dame and all her train,
The sov'reign hi'd submissive on the plain,
Her name and business next the nymph exprest;
The king surpris'd, the loyal fair embrac'd.
To serve their prince, she told these warriors came;
The Bruce accepts the aid, and thanks the gen'rous dame.
A band of forty kneeling on the shore,
A firm inviolable homage swore.
The king and chiefs dispose the listed war,
And straight to Turnb'rry fort conduct the fair.
Glad was the monarch, but his joy how short,
Soon as he heard the lady's sad report:
His royal consort to the foe betray'd,
His brother Athole, and brave Seaton dead.
How did he mourn, how did the chiefs deplore
That scene of fate, to them unknown before!
The dame herself some comfort must afford,
To sooth the leaders and their doleful lord.

Some time she stay'd, and her fond care exprest,
To lull the tumult in her sov'reign's breast;
At last departs, the chiefs in order came,
And homeward, grateful, guard the gen'rous dame.

BOOK III.

The King o'er Carrick now extends his sway,
Submit the chieftains, and the boors obey;
Peaceful and gently rules his native land,
And ev'ry subject feels the soft command.
But doughty Douglas, now a dreadful name,
Fir'd with an high uncommon thirst of fame,
Feels no delight, nor tastes his lab'ring breast
The lazy charms of an inglorious rest.
War's distant scenes still in his bosom roll,
And future fields run crimson in his soul.
Whilst thus his heart the glorious impulse feels,
He meets his prince, and thus his thoughts reveals:
'Now gen'rous sov'reign! have you gain'd your own,
'Th' auspicious prelude to your lineal crown:
'But Clifford still possest of my domains,
'His lawless title to my right maintains,
'But here I vow by all the immortal pow'rs,
'That tread yon azure vault and blissful bow'rs,
'He either shall resign my rightful state,
'Or one of us shall meet a sudden fate.
'Forth then, dread sov'reign! give me leave to go,
'Pursue my fortune, and attempt the foe.
'His arms and mine shall in the field be try'd,
'And fix the title to the conq'ring side,
'The chief may see your subject bravely die,
'But ne'er shall Clifford see the Douglas fly.'
The hero thus. But Bruce, whose cautious mind,
Events and means in just proportion join'd,
Oppos'd the motion, and the chieftain told,
'The foe was num'rous and the leader bold.
'Know thou dar'st,' he said, 'but hast not pow'r
'To mateh yon captain on the doubtful shore;
'Weigh well the odds, and thy resolves delay,
'Till heav'n shall open a securer way;

'Till we some farther our just rights regain,
'Then may we try our fortune on the plain.'
Thus the wise monarch. Douglas quick reply'd,
'Did all the pow'r of England guard his side,
'I'll meet the usurper in the field of death,
'My right re-conquer, or resign my breath.'
'Go then, said Bruce, and bless'd him as he went,
'May heav'n, propitious, second thy intent.'
Now Douglas speeds him to his native land,
And only two th' adventrous chief attend.
Thro' hills and dales, and rugged rocks by day,
Painful he labours on his cautious way.
By night some grove affords a mossy bed,
And round him throws its hospitable shade;
Secret, at last, thro' paths untrode before,
Arrives the hero on his native shore.
'Twas night, and now from the laborious field,
The swain retiring seeks his homely bield.
Sol's fiery chariot drench'd in ocean lies,
And stars began to spangle o'er the skies,
When thro' the gloom the chief a stead espy'd,
And a soft stream just murm'ring by its side.
Then from within a taper's twinkling light
Pointed his doubtful passage thro' the night,
Bold Douglas cautious view'd the stead around,
And by the barn the honest farmer found;
Who mark'd (his labour done) with curious eyes
The signs, and read the symptoms of the skies,
Adjusting by the stars to-morrow's toil,
To thresh the grain, or vex the fallow soil.
Because the stars (as swains experienced say)
Are certain prophets of the future day.
Douglas, the man approaching, softly calls,
'Friend, may three yeoman harbour in thy walls
'This night? nor longer we resolve to stay,
'But with to-morrow's sun renew our way.'
The lab'rer, unabash'd, inquires their name,
What their late journey meant, and whence they came?
And feign'dly satisfy'd in those requests,
Straight to his homely parlour leads his guests.
Now Douglas, seated in the household chair,
The rest promiscuous round the beamy fire,

View'd his new host, nor view'd without surprise,
And mark'd the sparkling vigour of his eyes,
A lively bloom his manly face o'erspread,
Though sixty winters had already shed
Their snowy honour o'er his rev'rend head:
Just were his sentiments, his looks serene,
And all the man express'd a more than vulgar mien;
Nor was the loyal boor unknown to fame,
True to his lord, and Dickson was his name,
A jolly rustic, and in danger bold,
Who long had serv'd the Douglas' sire of old:
The board was loaded with a clean repast,
And the kind host invites each hungry guest;
Great Douglas now, conspicuous by the light,
The farmer views, and wonders at the sight,
His noble mien, and his erected face,
Undaunted sheds around a dreadful grace;
His brows august in sable arches rise,
And glare two living fires his piercing eyes;
Huge nervous limbs compos'd the hero's frame,
His looks were terror, and his soul was flame!
The lab'rer curious runs his visage o'er,
And marks some features not unknown before;
Intent he gaz'd, impell'd by fond desire,
And in the son began to trace the sire.
By this the guests had finish'd their repast,
And sleep invites each weary guest to rest:
Douglas alone still with the farmer stay'd,
While to the chief the loyal Dickson said:—
'Pardon, my lord, perhaps an erring thought,
'Nor blame the man whose zeal may be his fault;
'Superior I, o'er all this menial throng,
'Your father serv'd, and think I saw you young:
'I shar'd my country's troubles, nor his fame
'Ev'n blush'd to mention Thomas Dickson's name:
'I know by South'ron pow'r my master gone,
'But hope I view the father in the son.'
He said, and tears run trickling from his eyes,
Whilst half astonish'd Douglas thus replies:
'Faithful o'd man, how am I pleas'd to see
'My father's friend and mine alive in thee;

'My good old father! dead in South'ron chains!
'And I excluded all his wide domains.
'While Clifford holds my heritage by might,
'And reigns a lawless tyrant o'er my right.
'Therefore I come (your ancient master's son),
'To try some method to regain my own;
'And here I vow by every sacred pow'r,
'That never shall I quit this native shore,
'Till Clifford or I resign without debate,
'Or one of us in battle meet his fate;
'Now (since the dubious means distract my choice),
'Prove your affection in your best advice.'
Thus spoke the chief, and Dickson soon reply'd,
'To-morrow's light some succours shall provide,
'My duty to your noble sire I own,
'Nor shall ungrateful e'er desert his son.'
This said, to bed the honest farmer goes,
And leaves the Douglas to his late repose.
Scarce had the orient dawn disclos'd the day,
When loyal Dickson speeds him on his way;
Through Douglasdale his eager steps he bends,
And secret warns his master's ancient friends,
Each man in private bids his arms prepare,
And singly to his farm by night repair;
The loyal swains to his desire accord,
And one by one haste to attend their lord.
Hardy in arms full forty rustics came,
And swore allegiance to brave Douglas' name.
Round their young chief the joyful vassals stood,
Old borderers, and long bred up to blood.
Douglas, meanwhile, embraces all his friends,
And artful their past services commends;
Now down in Dickson's barn the council sat,
The largest room and fittest for debate:
The question's put, what should be first essay'd,
The Douglas castle all at once reply'd;
For, if from Clifford we that fortress gain,
We may with greater ease the future strife maintain;
There South'rons hoard their stores, themselves secure,
And safe within the walls defy our pow'r.
Near to the castle, on the adjoining plain,
Erected stands Brigidia's ancient fane;

Thither next Sunday South'ron bear their palms,
There pay their vows, and distribute their alms.
Then let us each his private arms prepare,
And to the temple one by one repair.
There all at once, unwary as they stand,
Boldly with sword assail the South'ron band.
Assents the chief, each homeward bends his way,
And unsuspect'd waits th' appointed day.
Appear'd the day. The hardy Scots attend
At church, and South'rons from the fort descend,
Just as the priest the sacred rites began,
And all promiscuous crowding throng'd the fane:
Dickson aloud, the noble Douglas cry'd,
Th' appointed signal to the Scotish side:
The bord'rers at the word their weapons bare,
And fierce before the choir commence the war.
The priest and people with the scene dismay'd,
From 'midst the combatants confus'dly fled,
Straight to the chancel's utmost sacred mound,
And grasp'd th' inviolable altar round.
Meanwhile the South'rons in their arms appear
Rang'd in the choir, and bravely face the war;
But Douglas whirling round his flaming brand,
Like thunder bursts upon the adverse band;
And heaps on heaps the foe to ground he bore,
And purple streams stray'd o'er the hallowed floor.
His vassals almost interrupt the fight,
And gaze astonish'd at their leaders' might;
Till hardy Dickson Douglas names again,
Then all the Scots at once their force unrein,
And strew the breathless corpses round the fane.
Thence to the adjoining castle march'd the pow'r,
Warm as they were, and red with recent gore.
Void and defenceless 'gainst a hostile crowd,
With gates disclos'd, at large the fortress stood,
Ent'ring the train a cook and porter met,
Poor menials! doom'd to share their master's fate.
The porter negligent, deserv'd the stroke,
But where the trespass of the harmless cook;
Ev'n now had he prepar'd a sumptuous feast,
His hapless labours doom'd but just to taste;

His well dress'd victuals bloody Douglas gains,
Eats up his hopes, and riots in his pains.
The repast done, they search the castle o'er,
Seize clothes and arms, and pillage all the store;
Truss what they can, then fire the house around,
And the gay fortress level with the ground.
To woods and wilds, in secret through the land,
Repairs the chieftain and his loyal band;
But Dickson yet dissuaded to appear,
Till fresh supplies should reinforce their war.
Inform'd, now Clifford speeds o'er Solway's shore,
And through the dales indignant leads his pow'r.
He came, view'd his fort in ashes laid,
His stores all rifl'd, and his servants dead.
Bold Douglas, author of the horrid scene,
Vengeful he sought, but sought the chief in vain:
Nor durst too far through woods and wilds pursue
So brave a leader, and so bold a crew;
Returning soon, his artizans he calls,
Rebuilds the fort, and stronger rears the walls;
Appoints the guards, and reinstates the land,
And to keen Thirswall deputes the command.
This done, to Solway reconducts his host,
And quickly lands on England's fertile coast.
  In Carrick still the noble monarch lay,
And o'er his own exerts his clement sway.
The region whole a firm obedience shews,
Asserts his claim, and aids the royal cause.
Meantime great Pembroke from Edina's tow'rs,
Assembles all around the South'ron pow'rs;
Soon at the summons rendezvous the bands,
And hardy Omphraville the troops commands.
By Pembroke order'd to conduct the host
Against the Bruce, and Carrick's rebel coast;
Sudden the warlike chief in armour shines,
And straight to Air advance th' embattl'd lines,
Nor would sly Omphraville pursue too far,
Through fens and fastnesses the royal war.
He knew his force superior, but he knew
What the bold monarch in the field could do:
So judg'd it conduct to decline the fight,
To act by treachery, and to gain by slight,

A boor in Carrick, not unskill'd in arms,
And his two sons manur'd adjoining farms;
Robust in enterprizes hardy found,
The terror of the neighbourhood around,
Upon the sire the Bruce had oft rely'd,
And his firm faith in frequent danger try'd.
Firm unattempted——but too base to hold,
Unstain'd against th' infernal tempter gold;
Gold! of each virtue the undoubted test,
Dissolves in treason through the villain's breast,
As by degrees, in distant India's mines,
By suns and central streams the ore refines;
So in the soul the metal works by time,
Exalts to guilt, and ripens into crime.
Sly Omphraville a secret message sends
To the false boor, the boor the chief attends;
The treason in a moment is decreed,
And forty pound the price of Bruce's head.
Back to his farm returns the felon boor,
Informs his sons, and waits the treach'rous hour.
He knew the monarch us'd each op'ning dawn,
To take the air along a scroggy lawn;
Thence o'er a mountain to a distant wood,
A page attending on his solitude:
Thither completely arm'd the rogues repair
With swords and spears, and implements of war.
Now sudden must the glorious monarch bleed,
A traitor friend the author of the deed.
Unseen, unaided by his faithful bands,
Must fall a victim to a villain's hands.
But fate forbids! and Ariel from on high,
Swift as a thought shoots down the nether sky;
Not half so quick the lightning's flashy glare,
Bursts on the night, and glances through the air.
Fast by his charge, unseen the guardian stands,
Warns his brave heart, and fortifies his hands;
And now the monarch, through the gloomy dawn,
Espies the traitors stretching o'er the lawn.
Feels on his breast a jealous impulse roll,
And secret treason whisper'd in his soul;
What arms the boy had brought in haste demands,
A bow and single arrow charg'd his hands.

He snatch'd, and as he bent the twanging yew,
The trembling child assum'd a livid hue;
Then to the string he fits the feather'd flane,
And bids the page retire—for villains cross'd the plain.
Approaching now the three were just at hand,
When loud the monarch bids the villains stand;
Nor dare the lawn one further step to tread,
Or death attends the order disobey'd.
The rustic sire continues to advance,
And fawns, and seems surpris'd at his offence.
Inquires submissive—still approaching near,
The whizzing death swift cleaves the yielding air;
Through the left orb of light it pierc'd the brain,
The traitor reeling backward press'd the plain.
The vengeful son, fir'd at the father's fall,
Furious advanc'd the monarch to assail;
Charg'd in his hand a large broad faulchion shone,
The king unsheath'd his sword, and met the clown,
With manly force, full aim'd, the shining blade
Down to the jaws divides the villain's head.
Ireful the third, advancing to the war,
Against his prince protends a length of spear.
The monarch bending, shuns the coming foe,
And hews the lance asunder at a blow:
Then through his bowels drove the reeking brand,
Tumbles the rebel carcase on the strand.
Now roll the traitors in the jaws of death,
And curse the treason with their parting breath.
Their souls, with horror fraught, forsake the light,
Flit conscious to the shades, and veil their forms in night.
The scene completed, and the felons dead,
His vows to heav'n the grateful monarch paid.
Then with his page, returning to his own,
Relates the adventures of the distant lawn.
The chieftains hear the tale with vast surprise,
And blame their monarch, while they thank the skies.
Inform'd sly Omphraville pursues his way
Straight to Lochmabane where the warden lay;
Before that chief runs o'er the recent scene,
The treason baffled and the traitor slain.
Pembroke himself admires the monarch's force,
Though vex'd and puzzled in his future course.

Bruce rests a while; but soon a warlike host
From Galway's shore advance to Carrick coast;
Two hundred men in battle broad array'd,
The late escap'd M'Dougal at their head.
His pow'r dispos'd in hamlets through the land,
Scarce sixty warriors on the king attend.
With these the Bruce by night pursues his way,
Where a great river wash'd a craggy bay.
The royal watch had view'd the foe afar,
And to their own declar'd the coming war.
The crafty king in covert lodg'd his band,
Himself alone adventur'd to the strand;
Nor forward to engage in doubtful fight,
He went and view'd the foe by Cinthia's friendly light;
Full on the river's rocky margin stood,
And saw the van on horseback take the flood;
Then felt his soul with sudden ardour glow,
To match alone with all the coming foe;
The stream he saw in its deep channel glide,
And rising rocks o'erhung the silent tide.
Careful he search'd the rugged margin round,
And from the bank but one straight passage found;
Where one at once on horseback and no more,
Could just but labour up the steepy shore:
Fir'd by some pow'r divine! The monarch there
His sword unsheaths, and singly waits the war:
Advance the foes, and join'd, the current break,
The chieftain first describes the narrow track.
Cautious ascends, and as he culls his way,
A man in arms espies upon the bay.
He mounts, and near had gain'd the rugged brow,
When daring Bruce discharg'd a deadly blow;
Full on his casque descends the forceful stroke,
Backward the chieftain tumbles from the rock;
And checking as he fell th' untimely rein,
Recoil'd the steed on the succeeding train;
Hurl'd headlong downward from the craggy side,
Mix'd men and coursers founder in the tide.
Some in the fall were bruis'd, and others slain,
Their fellows gaz'd astonish'd at the scene.
Now fir'd with rage all hasten to the fray,
And with loud shouts at once ascend the bay.

But in the pass see the bold monarch stand,
And in the foremost courser plunge his brand.
Reels the gall'd courser back upon the crowd,
And Bruce's faulchion drinks the rider's blood.
Successful he pursues the lucky blow,
And down the steep confounded drives the foe;
Awful he thunders on the falling war,
And steeds and riders tumble on the shore.
Now mingl'd heaps on heaps they choke the bay,
The pass encumber, and block up the way:
Amaz'd, the rear in wild confusion stood,
Entangled in the margin of the flood.
Swift down the steepy track the monarch sped,
And dauntless trod the ruins of the dead.
Fierce on the river's brink by Cynthia's light,
With dreadful shouts commenc'd the doubtful fight;
With awful force he rush'd upon his foes,
Marr'd and encumber'd in the slimy ooze.
Full fifteen warriors by his single hand,
Drench'd in their blood, lay gasping on the strand.
Crush'd by his single might, the dastard pow'r,
Retire infamous to the farther shore;
Bear their disgrace to Gall'way's distant coast,
Returns the conqu'ring monarch to his host.
  Still in the dales the hardy Douglas lay,
And Thirswall still possest his native sway.
Long had he seen the haughty South'ron bands
Reign uncontroul'd, and riot o'er his lands:
At last the chief his friends to council calls,
Where a small wood half join'd the castle walls;
There they delib'rate to decoy the train,
And draw the haughty Thirswall to the plain.
Some herds, the country's spoils at random fed,
Hard by the fort, along a shrubby mead;
These Douglas orders ten to drive away,
In ambush forty in the forest lay,
Himself their head, soon by the ev'ning dawn,
Speedful they drive the cattle from the lawn;
The watch espies the theft, and sudden calls,
Thirswall and his in arms descend the walls,
Pursue the robb'ry o'er the op'ning glade,
And just had past the secret ambuscade,

When Douglas rose, and all the private war,
Rush'd to the plain, and charg'd the South'ron rear.
The blended shouts behind the van surprise,
And Thirswall wonders at the sudden noise;
Bright in his mail the ireful chief returns,
And desp'rate on the field the combat burns.
The word was Clifford on the South'ron side,
A Douglas—the bold borderers reply'd.
From plaits of polish'd steel the streaming gore,
In purple currents drench'd the braky shore.
Full in the front the hardy Thirswall stands,
His brave example animates his bands;
He sees bold Douglas thunder thro' the fight,
And forward rushes to oppose his might.
Against the chief advanc'd his shining spear,
The daring Douglas meets the extended war,
Evites the stroke, the truncheon hews in twain,
Glitters the steely fragment on the plain.
A slaunting blow next aim'd; the trenching blade,
Fast by the collar lopt the warrior's head.
By this the ten that drove the herd appear,
And with fresh vigour charge the South'ron rear;
Thus prest on ev'ry side the hostile train,
In mangl'd heaps lie scatter'd o'er the plain,
A few by flight the neighb'ring fortress gain;
To the pursuing war the gates oppose,
And bolts shut out the fury of the foes.
Douglas returns, and sudden bends his way,
To Carrick's coast, where still the monarch lay;
Since the late wondrous act the loyal bands
Increasing daily from the neighb'ring lands.
Then all at once decamp the royal war,
And to Glentroul's thick woody shades repair.
And now from Carlisle on the South'ron coast,
Pembroke and Vanes, and Clifford, lead their host;
Swift to Glentroul the squadrons shape their way,
And fifteen hundred shields reflect the day.
Long had the Bruce's stars malignant shed
Their direful influence o'er his royal head.
Long had he thro' a maze of dangers run,
His toils successive circling with the sun:

Thro' woods and mountains, and deserted shores,
Pursu'd by faction, and by foreign pow'rs:
Expos'd to want, to fears, and hostile snares,
And all the miseries of lawless wars;
But now the suff'rer feels the stars relent,
Their force exhausted, and their poison spent.
Each orb, benign, now shoots a milder ray,
And dawning glory rises on the day.
The heav'ns at last disclose th' immortal scenes,
Conquest, and laurels, and triumphant plains!
Bounteous the monarch's patient toils reward,
And victory sits brooding on his sword.
No more he needs to weigh the dire debate
Doom'd to the plain, and conqueror by fate,
The pow'rs, by patience won, at last have shed
A blaze of future glories round his head.

Approach'd the South'ron troops, and quickly found,
The Scots dispos'd along the higher ground.
Just where a woody mountain's rugged brow,
Threat'ning, o'erhung a steepy vale below.
The spies advanc'd to view the royal force,
And found that steep impassable to horse;
Soon they return, and to the leaders show
The ground and strait encampment of the foe:
Then Pembroke—'Useless here our cavalry,
'And if we strive on foot to force our way,
'The Scots advantag'd by the craggy height,
'Should mock our labour, and defeat our might;
'Long hath the Bruce in martial arts been skill'd,
'And long yon legions harden'd to the field;
'Then let us cautious shun the bold debate,
'Act by surprise, and conquer by deceit.
'Poorly array'd, a woman first shall go,
'And, unsuspected, shall decoy the foe;
'Slily expose the weakness of our train,
'And draw the Scots, incautious, to the plain.
'Meantime our troops unseen, from yonder wood
'Shall secretly surround the hostile crowd.'

The chiefs approve. The woman takes her way,
A staff supports her up the rugged bay.
Straight to the king the beggar traitress came,
And ask'd an alms in good St. Andrew's name;

So might that saint still shield him from all harms,
And grant due success to his righteous arms.
Not far encamp'd, she told on level ground
Sir Aylmer lay below the craggy mound.
But his raw troops, undisciplin'd appear,
Green to the field, and novices in war.
Would he descend, soon might he rout the foe,
Lock them to flight, and gain without a blow.
Full on her face the monarch fix'd his eye,
And gaz'd suspicion on the beggar spy,
His yeomen calls—out springs a nimble band,
And sudden seize the mendicant in hand;
Afraid of death, the trembling traitress kneels,
Her crime confesses, and the truth reveals;
Informs the king the South'rons were at hand,
And Pembroke, Vanes, and Clifford, led the band.
The monarch heard, and soon the war array'd,
And his broad banner in the field display'd.
Wedg'd in close ranks the firm battalions stood,
And now the foe advances from the wood.
A bow already bent the monarch drew,
Whizz'd the swift arrow from the twanging yew,
Quite thro' the foremost's gullet glanc'd the flane;
The wounded warrior, falling, bites the plain;
Fierce on the rank the hardy Edward goes,
And Hay and Douglas pour upon the foes.
With their bold chiefs advanc'd the inferior war,
And to the ground the South'ron vanguard bore.
Succeeding lines, dishearten'd with the sight,
Back thro' the wood precipitate their flight.
The haughty chiefs, asham'd at the defeat,
Industrious haste to stop the foul retreat;
Now threaten, now exhort the coward train,
But still they threaten and exhort in vain.
The hardy Scots th' astonish'd foe pursu'd,
And heaps of dead lay scatter'd thro' the wood.
The South'ron rear beheld the routed van,
And down the rocks in wild disorder ran.
The gen'rals fled, confounded and asham'd,
And ev'ry chief his fellow leader blam'd.
'Twixt Vanes and Clifford high the quarrel rose,
And words began to terminate in blows.

Divided bands espouse their chiefs' debate,
And South'ron lances South'ron lances threat;
But Pembroke's interposing pow'r prevails,
And quick the dang'rous civil diff'rence quells.
Thus Bruce, with twice two hundred in his train,
Drove fifteen hundred South'rons from the plain.
No longer now his royal pow'r conceals,
In woods and envious hills, and barren vales,
No more can brook the tedious slow debate,
Nor the dull tenor of the lazy fate;
But feels his bosom with new ardours glow,
To risk his future fortunes at a blow.
The chiefs he calls, and all the loyal bands,
Mounts at their head, and to the plain descends.
Through ev'ry honest breast what raptures ran,
Soon as the monarch glitter'd in the van;
With tears of joy the loyal troops beheld
Their prince undaunted take the open field,
In caves and woody coverts lurk no more,
On bleaky mountains, and a barren shore;
But to the plains descend in bold array,
The gilded lions waving in the day.
A thousand warlike Scots of ancient race
In steady ranks around the banner blaze,
Through Kyle and Cunningham direct their way:
The loyal regions own their sov reign's sway.
To Bothwell, where great Pembroke rul'd his host,
Soon spreads the news of Kyle's revolted coast.
Incens'd, that chief his rendezvous ordains,
In arms a thousand glitter on the plains,
To Coila's shore advance th' embattl'd lines,
And at their head the hardy Moubray shines;
But Douglas' spies abroad had timely view'd
The swift approaches of the hostile crowd;
Then sudden to the royal camp repair,
And to their chief narrate the coming war.
'Twas night, when Douglas call'd his proper band,
And sixty spears gleam'd o'er the dusky strand,
To Elderford he shapes his private way,
Where a strait pass 'twixt two morasses lay;
Thither he saw the foe must bend their course,
And knew that pass impervious to horse,

A narrow broken tract of rugged ground,
With fens, and briars, and brambles hedg'd around.
There all the night the Scots in ambush lay,
And soon as Phœbus rose to gild the day,
In order rang'd, approach'd the South'ron war,
Their gilded ensigns glitt'ring in the air:
The Scots still lurk'd unseen, till all the pow'r
Their steeds dismounting, throng'd the narrow shore:
Then all at once the hardy ambush rose,
And, shouting, fierce assail'd th' encumber'd foes,
With steely lances gor'd th' astonish'd van,
And men and coursers tumbled in the fen.
So strait the pass, so deep those fens below,
So fierce th' assault, and so amaz'd the foe,
That Moubray, ev'n with tears, beheld his band
Without resentment butcher'd on the strand;
The muddy oose stood stagnated with gore,
And mangled steeds and warriors chok'd the shore;
The dire disaster of the slaughter'd van,
Back to the rear in doubled terrors ran.
Where hopes or fears direct their doubtful way,
Diverse they fled, astonish'd in the day.
The chief deserted views the routed war,
The murder'd vanguard and the flying rear.
Griev'd and inflam'd at the disast'rous sight
Unreins his steed, and rushes through the fight,
Charg'd in his hand a lance he bore on high,
A steely faulchion glitter'd at his thigh;
Onward he drove, and as he scour'd the strand
A Scotish warrior seiz'd his shining brand,
Grasp'd the strong belt, and strove, but strove in vain,
To stop the gallant Moubray on the plain;
Furious he rush'd, and in the warrior's hand
The bursting belt he left and shining brand;
Thus, having 'scap'd the danger of the day,
First to Kilmarnock he directs his way;
Thence through Kilwinning and the Largs he goes,
Till Inverkip at last affords a late repose;
A South'ron garrison that fortress held,
To these the chiefs narrates the hapless field,
His troops all helpless butcher'd in his sight,
By Scotish treachery and Douglas' might.

In Bothwell still the warden held his seat,
Vex'd at the news of Moubray's sore defeat;
Rage in his breast, and grief alternate roll,
And sudden thirst of vengeance fires his soul.
Soon to the Bruce a trusty herald sends;
The herald, careful, bears his lord's commands.
The purport thus—Against a certain date,
If Bruce would venture on the stern debate,
His sly attempts and stratagems refrain,
And nobly dare to risk the gen'rous plain,
Then should the hero fix his future fame,
Alive, renown'd, or dead, a glorious name.
Arriv'd the herald, and his charge reveal'd,
The dauntless king accepts the proffer'd field,
'Twixt Galston heath, where lay the royal pow'r,
And Loudon hill, upon the mossy shore,
There was the ground determin'd, and the day
Fix'd to the first approaching tenth of May.
Returns the messenger with speedy care,
And to the chiefs narrates th' accepted war,
The time prefix'd, and the determin'd ground,
And now to arms the South'ron trumpets sound.
To Bothwell, where the rendezvous was made,
Convene the legions for the war array'd,
Three thousand whole adorn'd in martial pride,
Bred to the field, and oft in battle try'd,
The chief confided in these daring bands,
Secure of conquest from such valiant hands.
Meantime the king, by prudence ever-rul'd,
Cautious in warmth, and rationally bold,
Whose courage no fermented spirits fir'd,
No rising tumult of the blood inspir'd;
Where sudden gusts of passion furious roll,
And rage ungovern'd supersedes the soul!
But led by schemes from due reflection brought,
By solid plans and consequence of thought;
Each circumstance with circumstance still weighs,
And all the series of the action sees;
Then dauntless in the field his force unreins,
Combats from reason and by reason gains.
Thus, on the ninth, while shades involv'd the night,
Secret he went and view'd the field of fight.

He found the breachy plain lay stretch'd too wide,
But hemm'd with marshes upon either side;
Fear'd lest the foe should on that length of ground,
Outwing his numbers, and his troops surround;
Three ramparts therefore from each bord'ring fen,
Of hurdles rear'd, he drew across the plain.
Nor did these ramparts at the centre close,
But op'ning breaches so receiv'd the focs,
As equal force might equal force oppose.
This done, back to his host he bends his way,
Prepares the war, and waits th' approaching day.
Arose the day, and Phœbus from the deep
His blazing car drives up the orient steep,
From Bothwell's plains approach the South'ron lines,
And pompous in the van proud Pembroke shines.
The van on barbed steeds, that chief around,
Rode sheath'd in mail, with clasping silver bound;
Next these, with lances arm'd and bossy shields,
Advanc'd the second battle o'er the fields;
Their gilded banners high in air display'd,
And Omphraville and Clifford at their head.
The noble Bruce perceiv'd them from afar,
And at the second rampart rang'd his war:
Seven hundred Scots in native armour shone,
And spears and axes glitter'd in the sun.
The gen'rous king full in the centre stood,
And on his right the fiery Edward rode;
The left, to battle rang'd in firm array,
Were led by doughty Douglas to the day.
Three hundred waggoners, ignoble crowd,
Upon the hill retir'd, at distance stood.
Approach'd the foe. The monarch gives the sign,
And rushing pow'rs in furious combat join,
From either hosts promiscuous shouts arise,
Ring thro' the hills, and thicken up the skies;
With spears protended, and opposing shields,
Together, dreadful, rush the adverse fields.
Resounds the crash of lances through the air,
And roars transfix'd with wounds the dying war.
The lances broke, unsheath'd by eager hands,
Through all the ranks thick flame the glitt'ring brands.

The noble Pembroke animates his train,
Inspires the combat, and supports the plain.
'You have I chose, he said, to guard my fame,
'On you alone depends your Pembroke's name.'
Meantime the Bruce in ev'ry rank appears,
Aids ev'ry scene, and ev'ry danger shares,
Each single warrior by his name he calls,
Commends his worth, and ev'ry blow extols.
Through all the field he sheds a father's care,
Each soldier's bosom warms, and cheers the war.
'Tis yours, my friends,' he said, 'this day to show,
'If I must rule you, or yon foreign foe:
'Lodg'd in your hands is all your Bruce's fate,
'By you he's wretched, or by you he's great;
'In you your country's latest hopes remains,
'Her ancient freedom, or her future chains.'
He spoke, and bursting on the hostile bands,
Unquestion'd death in every blow descends.
Even Edward wonders at his brother's might,
And onward rushes to support the fight.
Clifford and Omphraville exert their pow'r,
Thick burns the combat round the insanguin'd shore,
Here daring Douglas and the gallant Hay;
There subtile Boyd resistless urge their way.
The crimson torrents roll along the strand,
And heaps of warriors, dying, spurn the sand;
The king the vanguard broke, and all around
Widens the spreading ruin o'er the ground;
Next Edward ravages the bloody coast,
And breaks, and drives, and scatters Clifford's host,
The South'ron rear beholds the van defeat,
And, spite of threats and promises, retreat;
In vain great Pembroke, long in battle skill'd,
Us'd all his conduct to sustain the field:
Vain were his flatt'ries, his reproaches vain,
The Grampion legions thunder thro' the plain.
As when some storm, long hung in bellowing clouds,
Bursts from their hollow womb, and sweeps the woods,
The roaring tempest in its rage descends,
This way and that the crackling forest bends;
Nor able to oppose its dreadful course,
Yields to the blast, and falls beneath its force.

So yield, o'erpower'd at length, the hostile lines,
And all the wav'ring field at once inclines.
The Scots to death a thousand warriors bore:
Bold troops! the pride of all the South'ron pow'r.
The rest amaz'd, and daunted at the sight,
From the dire field precipitate their flight;
Homeward great Pembroke from the Scotish coast,
Retires, indignant, and resigns his trust.
The chieftains fled along, and all the band
Dispers'd, at once desert the hostile land.
The provinces to Bruce their homage pay,
And all the west, obedient, owns his sway.
The west reduc'd, with banners broad display'd,
The monarch to the north his squadrons led,
His hardy brother and the gallant Hay,
Lennox and Boyd, attend him on his way.
Meantime bold Douglas, with his trusty friends,
Private to Douglasdale his passage bends,
Reduc'd his fortress, and his native lands,
And Etrick whole rescued from South'ron hands.
Randolph and Stewart who had, since Methven's plain,
Renounc'd their faith and serv'd the hostile train,
Both pris'ners of war the Douglas made,
And to the king the kindred captives led.
Meantime the king still northward march'd his host,
But on the mountain sicken'd as he past;
Of this inform'd Buchania's rebel Thane
Near Inverary rendezvous'd his train,
Fix'd on revenge, his treach'rous uncle dead,
Full fifteen hundred to the field he led,
Brechin, himself, and Moubray at their head.
Of their approach the monarch quickly hears,
Tho' unrecovered for the fight prepares.
Straight he commands a troop to guard him round,
And bear him in a litter to the ground.
His brother orders in the van to ride,
And Hay, and Boyd, and Lennox, by his side;
These, secret, bids direct him in the fray,
Check his fierce heat, and guide him thro' the day.
Pleas'd with his orders Edward quickly shines
Before the van, and onward leads the lines.

In arms seven hundred hasten to the plain;
The bold array soon shook the coward thane;
Nor daring to endure the warlike sight,
The rebel squadrons meditate their flight.
The king that instant felt his illness gone,
And mounting sudden in the centre shone.
His friends astonish'd rend with shouts the air,
Inglorious fled at once the rebel war.
Cumming and * Moubray haste to shun their death,
To South'ron shores, but there resign their breath.
Brechin to his own castle bends his flight,
And, there besieg'd, soon owns the Bruce's right.
The monarch rode through all the northern land,
The north at once acknowledg'd his command;
To Angus thence returning, rests a while,
Then Forfar's fortress level with the soil;
To Tay advancing next, the royal pow'rs
With hardy force assaulted Bertha's tow'rs;
Their ladders rear'd, the monarch foremost scales,
And all the legions sudden mount the walls,
The tow'rs demolish, and the works around,
The scatter'd ruins smoke along the ground.
All these reduc'd, straight with a select band,
Edward advanc'd to Gall'way's rugged strand.
St. John and Omphraville, in arms well skill'd,
Twice there defeat, and drove them from the field.
Victorious over all the region past,
And to his brother's sway reduc'd the coast.
Douglas, now master of his native land,
Straight to the monarch reconducts his band;
Makes Stuart and Randolph in his journey share,
And to the king presents the rebel pair.
Soon Stuart, submissive, own'd his forc'd offence,
And had his crime forgiv'n on penitence;
But Randolph obstinate, the king ordains
To stricter durance, only free from chains;
Till friends, and his repentance interpos'd,
Obtain'd his pardon, and the captive loos'd.
Brave Randolph, first among the loyal train,
Created Lord of Murray's fertile plain.

* Sir John Moubray, not that person who held Stirling castle, whose name was Sir Philip Moubray.

The royal host again led forth to war,
In arms to Lorn (rebellious clime) repair.
That chief the royal cause had long distrest,
O'er-run and ruin'd half the royal west.
With rage the monarch feels his bosom glow,
And fraught with vengeance hastens to the foe.
Appris'd, bold Lorn convenes his trait'rous pow'r,
Two thousand targets glitter on the shore:
Hard by the sea, where a rough mountain's brow
Slop'd by degrees, and touch'd a stream below;
Deputed leaders the fierce war array,
Himself embark'd beheld them from the sea;
For Lorn now dreading hardy Bruce's might,
Had mann'd his galleys to secure his flight.
By spies ascertain'd of the rebel's post,
The wary monarch soon divides his host.
Douglas he orders with the archer lines,
And Gray and Frazer to that leader joins.
Unseen by any foe, their rout to keep,
And fetch a compass round the rugged steep.
Soon as they heard himself begin th' attack,
Then unawares to charge the rebels back.
Douglas obeys: The monarch takes his way,
And foremost boldly mounts the craggy bay,
Advance the foe, and from the mountain pour
Fast heaps of tumbling stones, a rocky show'r.
In vain the king still presses to the war:
By that stern Douglas thunders on the rear.
The vanguard in close fight the monarch join'd,
And the fierce archers gall'd them from behind,
Th' environ'd rebels desp'rate in the fight,
Exert the utmost rage of savage might.
Vain rage! behind in feather'd tempests flew,
The whizzing flanes, and wide destruction drew;
The hardy king the ruin spreads before,
In heaps the dead and dying crowd the shore;
A few escap'd, but met the fate they shunn'd,
Amidst th' adjoining streams deep eddies drown'd.
M'Dougal's self swift launching to the main,
Ploughs to some distant coast the wat'ry plain.
Submits Argyle at last to Bruce's sway,
And all the tribes their due obedience pay.

Now from the heights descend the loyal pow'rs,
And spread their conquests o'er the champaign shores.
Linlithgow's tower by Binny's means they gain,
And the strong bulwark levels with the plain.
To Perth the monarch march, and Randolph rais'd
To favour now, and high with titles grac'd;
* To the wing'd camp advanc'd by Fortha's coast,
And near the maiden fortress lodg'd his host.
The maiden fortress still the South'ron keep,
And Randolph boldly storms the rocky steep.
In vain, impregnable the castle stands,
And mocks the labours of the loyal bands;
Frances at last a secret passage found,
And led the chieftain up the craggy mound;
First Frances mounts by night, the legions scale,
And drive the watches headlong o'er the wall:
Arose the guards, and quick commence the war,
The hardy Scots their sudden weapons bare;
Fierce on the foe the hardy Randolph flew,
And at a stroke the South'ron captain slew;
The doughty legions seconded their head,
And all the guards along the works lay dead.
Bold Randolph thus Edina's fort possest,
And long fatigu'd indulg'd his grateful rest.
Meantime the Douglas, on the border dales,
Roxburgh's strong tow'rs by craft nocturnal scales,
Unseen the warriors climb the steepy mound,
And all the fortress scatter o'er the ground,
All Teviotdale by force the chief o'er-runs,
The land reduc'd, its rightful sov'reign owns.
By this fierce Edward on th' allectian shore,
Had quickly rendezvous'd his select war.
Into the town his hardy legions pours,
And soon in ruins lays the ancient tow'rs.
Without delay from thence to Stirling coast,
Boldly advances the victorious host:
Around the wall dispos'd the hardy train,
Assault with fury, but assault in vain;
† That seat the gallant Moubray boldly held,
Wise at the board, and daring in the field;

* The brave Sir Philip Moubray, at this time in the English interest; but, after the battle of Bannockburn, he became loyal to King Robert.

† The Castra alata, or winged camp, an old appellation of the city of Edinburgh.

Edward impatient of the tedious hours,
And Moubray dreading his decaying stores;
Both to a mutual interview advance,
And artful Moubray thus propounds his sense:—
'My lord, you've prov'd, and found the fortress strong,
'The siege expensive, and the labour long;
'Could you accept a truce for certain days,
'Throughout which time hostilities may cease;
'Then I, assisted by the South'ron might,
'Shall fairly meet your troops in equal fight;
'But if I'm still unsuccour'd by these pow'rs,
'Then at the day the fortress shall be yours.'
Edward unseen in politic designs,
Accepts the terms, and the sly treaty signs, [lines.
And from the leaguer'd walls draws off the Scotish
To fair Augusta Moubray speeds his way,
The haughty seat of great Caernarvon's sway;
There the bold chief before the South'ron states,
Propones the treaty, and the terms relates:
The king and peers applaud the leader's sense,
Commend the truce, and jest the Scotish prince.
Meantime to Perth, where his wise brother lay,
Good undesigning Edward shapes his way,
Joyful relates each various action done,
The treaty sign'd, and hardy Moubray gone;
The monarch heard the terms with vast surprise,
And on his thoughtless brother fix'd his eyes.
Then thus, 'Fond man! which shall I first regret,
'A brother's folly, or my country's fate?
'Harass'd with toil, with dangers press'd before,
'Hast thou not learn'd to know yon monarch's pow'r.
'Yon monarch! whom no neighb'ring states withstand,
'Sole heir of all his father's large command;
'Whose sway not Britain's shores alone restrain,
'Wide stretch his conquests o'er the distant main;
'His tyranny, not Cambria feels alone,
'Or in his bonds Hibernian valleys groan.
'Great part of France and Flanders owns his claim,
'And Europe trembles at his mighty name. [shores?
'Drawn from those climes, what swarms shall croud our
'How vast th' assemblage? How array'd the pow'rs?
'Their numbers shall our utmost thoug[illegible] beguile,
'Extend o'er shires, and darken half the isle;

'The rebel Scots besides, a potent line,
'In arms already, shall their standards join;
'Then what are we, how small our native lands?
'How weak our force? How thin our loyal bands?
'See our dispeopled plains, or barren soil,
'To faction long expos'd, and foreign spoil;
'Consider this, and view the treaty made,
'And all our hopes in that one treaty dead;
'By cautious steps we hop'd our right to gain,
'But rashly thou hast render'd caution vain;
'Disarm'd and bound by truce so long a date,
'Secures the tyrant, and completes our fate;
'Long have we vainly spent our tedious hours,
'Midst hoary mountains and deserted shores,
'Midst cold and heat, and hunger's pinching pain,
'Long have we toil'd, but long have toil'd in vain.
'In anxious thoughts have past the wakeful night,
'And girt with foes, consum'd the dang'rous light:
'By suff'ring partly we regain'd our sway,
'And Fabius like we conquer'd by delay.
'In one rash word now all our labour's gone,
'Our hopes extinguish'd, and ourselves undone.
'Say brother! Whence shall we our troops prepare,
'Where is our force to meet yon dreadful war?'
He spoke disdainful. Edward fierce replies:
'By all the pow'rs that tread yon spangling skies;
'Let isles united with the distant land,
'And Europe pour her millions on our strand;
'Resolv'd I'll dauntless face the dread array,
'And meet the glorious terrors of the day.
'I love the gen'rous treaty, and in vain
'Should crowns and sceptres bribe me from the plain;
'Scotland may see me fall, but never yield,
'Or fly a coward from so brave a field.'
The monarch smil'd, his dauntless soul he knew,
And what he dar'd to say he dar'd to do;
The noble warrior in his arms he prest,
And all the brother kindled in his breast.
Then thus, 'So may just Heav'n our counsels aid,
'As I shall sacred keep what thou hast said;
'Haste then, bid all our loyal friends prepare
'To join our standard 'gainst the day of war,

'The day! when each pretension shall be try'd,
'And Heav'n determine on the juster side.'
Meanwhile Caernarvon mounts his royal seat,
The peers around in splendid order wait,
Thence to the chiefs he issues his commands,
To raise his pow'rs, and muster all his bands,
Near Berwick's walls on Tweeda's fertile plains,
The royal writ the rendezvous ordains;
The warlike chiefs in sudden armour shone,
And round despatch'd the mandate of the throne.
Straight ring the South'ron shores with loud alarms,
And drums and trumpets mingled sound to arms.
Sing muse, from various climes th' assembled throng,
And fits these names and numbers to the song,
Where Wye's smooth stream, and Severn's fiercer side,
Through Cambrian dales in wild meanders glide;
Where British billows pent indignant roar,
And furious lash old Cornwall's chalky shore;
Rose thirty thousand in strange arms array'd,
And hardy Monmouth glitter'd at their head.
Where Thame and Isis roll their royal waves,
And the mixt current princely structures laves:
Where flows the Ouze, and Trent divides the land,
(Both lost in Humber's more capacious strand.)
Arose the mighty Trinobantian host,
And fifty thousand cloud the darken'd coast,
The moving bands the neighbouring vales o'erspread,
By Arundel and gallant Oxford led.
From Humber's stream, whose tumbling waves resound
And deafen all th' adjoining coast around.
To where the Tweed in softer windings flows,
Full fifty thousand quiver'd arrows rose.
A hardy race, who well experienc'd knew
To fit the shaft, and twang the bended yew:
Bred up to danger, and inur'd to dare
In distant fight, and aim the feather'd war.
These bands their country's highest triumphs boast,
And Gloucester and Hertford led the host.
Advance the factious Scots, a rebel line,
And to the foe their impious levies join,
Five times five thousand, by experience skill'd,
To mix in closer combat on the field,

Led by great Omphraville, well known to fame,
And bold Corspatrick, a redoubted name.
Next to the Scots approach th' Hibernian pow'rs,
From hoary mountains and from fenny shores;
Three times ten thousand strong, a nervous race,
Bred to wild game, and nimble in the chase;
Before these troops Fitzgerald's haughty son,
The brave O'Neil and hardy Desmont shone.
From Gallia now, and Belgium's distant coast,
In arms assembled, moves the foreign host.
Twice twenty thousand whole, a warlike train
In sixty galleys plow the wat'ry plain.
Nor does the muse the leaders names rehearse,
Nor stand those names so smooth in British verse.
Albion's white cliff soon gain the foreign sails,
And pour their legions on Northumbrian vales.
Now with the king from fair Augusta's towers
Proceed the court to Berwick's crowded shores,
The awful king! in gold and gems array'd,
The vast, the wond'rous rendezvous survey'd.
His thick battalions views extended far,
And glories in the lengthen'd pomp of war.
The various climes in various armour shine,
And distant nations wonder as they join,
Review'd, wide o'er the fields encamp the pow'rs
Repairs the shining court to Berwick's tow'rs.
Near Stirling's walls where Forth's large billows play,
The noble Bruce with twice two hundred lay;
From whence around his royal writ he sends,
To warn the chiefs, and summon all his friends.
Meantime he view'd the ground, and mark'd a plain,
Th' intended muster of the royal train,
Before that plain a league extended lay,
A green sward marish upon a slaunting bay.
The king well seen in all events of war,
The muddy fen surveys with cautious care,
His troops he calls, and digs a spear length deep,
The level marish from the sloping steep.
Then plants with sharpen'd piles the tract around,
And close with hurdles covers o'er the ground,
Untouch'd the plain appear'd, and all the hallow found.

Behind those fens the king resolv'd to stand,
And there the haughty foe's first charge attend.
The Scotish peasants from the champaign shore,
Up to the mountains led their household store;
The plains of herds and victual dispossest,
And left the country one abandon'd waste.
Now rings th' alarm along the northern coasts,
And rush to war the Caledonian hosts.
From Skye, Pomona's isles, and Caithness strand,
Three thousand targets glitter o'er the land.
The Skye and Orkneys their own chieftains head;
And Caithness' troops the gallant Sinclair led;
Strathnaver, Sutherland in arms appear,
And the bold Rossians issue to the war.
The brave M'Donalds and M'Kenzies join,
Frasers, and Grants, and the Clanchattan line.
That stretch dispers'd along the Hebridian shores;
Monroes, M'Leans, M'Kays, and all the pow'rs;
These hardy troops in Scythian arms array'd,
Distinct in tribes their proper chiefs obey'd.
Convene the bands on Rossia's spacious bay,
And twice three thousand bucklers gild the day.
From Murray's shores advance a thousand spears;
And daring Randolph at their head appears.
East on Tœzalia's coast there lies a plain,
Blest with rich pasture and luxuriant grain.
Much fam'd for cattle, much for woolly store,
But for its hospitable people more;
On its smooth margin German billows play,
And pour their finny millions in each bay.
This region, 'spite of the false Thane's commands,
Rais'd and maintain'd at its own charge, sends
A thousand warriors to the royal aid,
By bold Philorth and brave Pitsligo led.
And now in arms the noble Gordon shines,
And Enzie's squadrons to Strathbogie joins.
Arabia's keen axes in the centre glare,
And Badenoch gleams horrid in the rear.
Next hardy Forbes and the gallant Mar,
On Don's fair borders rendezvous the war,
Forbes! in Scotia's annals long renown'd,
And oft of old with loyal laurels crown'd.

Horestia's plains a thousand warriors yield,
And godlike Marshal leads them to the field.
Thrice noble chief! I feel my spirit roll,
And all the hero rushes to my soul.
Where shall the muse commence thy deathless fame?
From what immortal era trace thy name;
She saw him 'midst surrounding ruins stand,
When hardy Camus bit the bloody strand;
When from the field he bore the regal spoils,
Proud prize! the badge of his triumphant toils,
Oft would the muse have sung the godlike line,
But the bold task still check'd the just design;
Fond she set out, but felt the theme too strong,
Too high the labour, and too vast the song.
Nor needful—For, what genius ever sings
Of Scotia's heroes and her ancient kings?
Let their fam'd deeds but once the muse engage,
And still some Keith shall glitter in the page.
Next where the Esk a double current pours.
And laves Æneias ever loyal shores;
Two thousand lances gleam along the strand,
Strathmore, Southesk, and Airly, led the band,
Airly, renown'd for ancient honours gain'd,
When Gilchrist conquer'd, and a William reign'd,
Kinnaird and Falconer their legions call,
The brave Dundee and ever faithful Maule.
Adjoining near a fruitful region lies,
The darling care of more indulgent skies,
Whose sunny mountains and luxuriant vales
Are fann'd by friendly zephyrs softer gales,
Where the rich year in vast profusion reigns,
Riots in groves, and revels on the plains;
Thence came a thousand in bright mail array'd,
Glitter'd the mighty Arrol at their head.
Full of his sires, the hero took the field,
Display'd the yoke glar'd in his bloody shield.
Proud ensign! glory of that dire debate,
Where dauntless Hay revers'd the Scotish fate.
When Loncarty beheld th' Albanian pow'rs
Vanquish'd and routed on her sanguine shores:
'Twas then great Hay oppos'd the shameful flight,
Drove back the conquer'd, and renew'd the fight.

Through Cimbrian ranks, impetuous fore'd his way,
And thund'ring with his yoke restor'd the day,
By him, thus wond'rous rose the ruin'd state,
Conquer'd by loss, and triumph'd by defeat.
'Twere long in ancient actions to engage
And crowd with diff'rent characters the page,
Nor needful is the task, our chiefs of old,
Brave by succession, and by birth-right bold,
In all their fathers' various virtues shone,
And ev'ry sire descended in the son.
Bred to the field, and conscious of their might,
They rang'd the globe, and taught the world to fight.
From Fife's fair coast three thousand take the plain,
Headed by Wemyss and Crawford's ancient Thane,
The noble Wemyss, M'Duff's immortal son,
M'Duff th' assertor of the Scotish throne,
Whose deeds let Birnane and Dunsinnan tell,
When Canmore battl'd, and the villain fell.
By Athole and by Perth array to war,
Three thousand lances glitter in the air,
See! glorious in his sires the great Montrose,
Amidst his conqu'ring Grahams to battle goes.
His mail bright studs of gold enamel'd gild,
Th' immortal trophy of some ancient field.
Three times five hundred to the war proceed,
By Eglinton, and Nairn, and Bothwell, led.
Carrick and Kyle pour forth their hardy train,
And Kennedy conducts them to the plain,
Renfrew and Bute, and Rothsay, join'd their aid,
Glitters the godlike Stewart at their head,
Advance in arms the Argathelian lines,
And in the van the loyal Campbell shines;
Some faithful aids approach from Lothian's coast,
And Seaton's loyal offspring leads the host.
From Mercia's fertile plains appear'd a band
Obedient to the gallant Hume's command.
Confed'rate dales, and warlike borders join,
Proud at their head to see great Douglas shine.
Fierce Edward last, leads from his native shores,
Rang'd to the field, the Gallovidian pow'rs.
Thus from the distant north, and Solway's sands,
At Bannockburn arriv'd the loyal bands.

The king with joy beheld th' assembl'd train,
Full five and thirty thousand crowd the plain.
The chiefs embrac'd, and view'd the squadrons round,
Assign'd their stations, and mark'd out the ground:
The leaders to the royal tent repair,
And o'er the fields encamp'd th' inferior war.
Now, in ten battles rang'd from Tweeda's vales,
The South'ron pow'rs advance through Lothian dales;
The wide extended pomp the region fills,
Glares o'er the lawns, and gleams along the hills;
Nations on nations shed the crowded strand
From shore to shore, and cover half the land,
Thick as the waving grain the valley clouds,
Or leaves in spring that load the blooming woods,
Lances and shields emit their blendid rays,
And o'er the distant plains confus'dly blaze.
Through Lothian swift advance the swarming pow'rs,
And sudden crowd Badotria's winding shores.
Thence quick arriving at the various fane,
Wide o'er the fields encamp the numerous train.
Detach'd old Stirling's fortress to secure,
Before the host Lord Clifford leads his pow'r.
In arms eight hundred with the leader ride,
Choice bands! the mighty Edward's chiefest pride.
Meantime bold Randolph, charg'd a post to keep,
Close by the temple, on a sloping steep,
Through which, unheaded by the Scots, the chief
March'd his swift legions to the town's relief,
Foul negligence! to expiate his offence,
And sooth the just displeasure of his prince,
With eager steps pursues th' escaped war,
Two hundred lances shining in his rear.
Soon as the South'ron chiefs the Scots beheld,
With force inferior boldly take the field;
Disdainful in array he rang'd his band,
And in the front himself and Howard stand;
Howard the brave! a knight renown'd in fame,
The boast, the glory of the South'ron name.
Ambitious chief! too eager in the strife,
Too rashly bold and prodigal of life;
Forward thou rushes upon certain death,
And 'midst unnumber'd wounds resign'st thy breath,

Thy native troops with tears beheld thee bleed,
And England yet laments her hero dead.
Meanwhile the combat furious burns around,
And crimson tides roll slippery o'er the ground.
Baulk'd in his first design, and fir'd with spite,
The haughty Clifford vig'rous urg'd the fight,
His lengthen'd ranks extended o'er the ground,
And just began to enclose the Scots around.
This Randolph saw, and with a general's care,
Dispos'd into an orb his thinner war,
Each way objected spears and gleaming shields,
Glitter an iron circle round the fields;
And now both hosts in closer combat join,
And thick'ning deaths in redder ruin shine;
Nor knows the ardent warrior to retire,
Fix'd where he stands to conquer or expire;
No blendid shouts of war's tremendous voice,
Ring through the hills, or rattle in the skies;
The busied field hears no tumultuous breath,
But clashing armour and the groan of death;
Glorious each chief, and grim with dust and blood,
Amidst the war with rival fury rode.
Along the strand the wid'ning havoc spread,
And round them roll'd in heaps the mangl'd dead;
But English bowmen long in battle skill'd,
With feather'd deaths sore gall'd the Scotish field.
This Douglas viewing from the camp afar,
Thus to the king prefers a soldier's prayer.
'Sovereign,' he said, 'may Heaven direct the day,
'And may to-morrow's sun secure thy sway;
'As I with pity view yon dreadful scene,
'And Randolph sweating on th' unequal plain,
'Opprest with numbers, and o'erwhelmed with foes,
'Behold your hero fainting in your cause;
'Soon shall he fall 'midst yon superior host,
'And Scotia in her second hope be lost.
'Forbid it fate, that thou our gen'rous prince,
'Forgive a nephew's undesign'd offence;
'O'erlook the fault, and let me haste to share
'Yon bloody field, and turn the scale of war;
'So may kind Heaven confirm thy right divine,
'And fix the sceptre ever in thy line,'

He said—the monarch thus himself exprest,
The gen'ral scene engrossing all his breast,
No aid from us this day shall screen his crime,
My slighted words and his neglected time;
Let him unsuccour'd, 'midst yon furious crowd,
Feel his past folly, and repent in blood;
He spoke, and through the camp pursu'd his way,
To view the troops, and predispose the day.
Still on the spot the hardy Douglas stay'd,
Fix'd to his purpose, and resolv'd to aid;
When now the foe, with pleasure he beheld,
Loose in their ranks, and reeling in the field.
Randolph and his, with unresisted might,
Bearing down crowds, and bursting through the fight,
Then stopt the intended aid—lest aid had stain'd
The glory by such blood and labour gain'd:
And now Lord Clifford's troops desert the war,
And Randolph thunders on the flying rear,
Back to their host retreats their routed train,
And twice two hundred breathless press the plain,
Randolph returns, the monarch grasp'd his hand,
And to their rest ordain'd the weary band.
By this the night unusual darkness spreads,
And heav'n and earth involves in thickest shades,
No beams from Cynthia's silver orb appear,
No lesser taper twinkles in the sphere!
But nature sunk in sable horrors lay
Profound and pregnant with the future day;
Yet watchful Bruce exerts a father's care,
And through the silent gloom explores the war.
Views all the lines, now part in slumbers lost,
Part talking, wakeful, of the adverse host,
In deep attention still he march'd along,
And mark'd the whole behaviour of the throng.
In ev'ry word, in ev'ry gesture skill'd,
And as he went dispos'd the approaching field.
Near to th' entrenchments stood an ancient fane,
The pious structure of some former reign,
Where midnight vows employ the rev'rend sires,
And twinkle in their lamp the drowsy fires,
Thither his private orisons to pay,
Devout the monarch treads his silent way,

The priests receive him with paternal care,
But soon to heaven as he prefers his pray'r,
Dreadful through all the sky's loud thunders roll,
And the thick lightning gleams from pole to pole.
The fathers hast'ning to the porch espy
Two flaming armies combat in the sky,
The legions seem'd to blaze in red attire,
And all the visionary war on fire.
Then sudden, in a train of flashy light,
Downward bright Ariel shoots along the night;
Straight to the king appears within the shrine,
Celestial glories round his temples shine,
His flowing robe in azure volumes roll'd,
Bright sapphires blazing on ethereal gold,
(Pure radiant gold of heav'n, without allay)
Around the fane diffus'd a flood of day.
The gen'rous monarch, at the sight amaz'd,
On the bright form with awful rev'rence gaz'd;
When Ariel thus—'From regions distant far,
'Beyond the convex of yon arched sphere,
'Where blissful minds dissolv'd in raptures lie,
'Or float on azure pinions thro' the sky;
'Or on the Trine's immortal glories gaze,
'Bask in the beams, and live upon the blaze;
'Down from those happy seats to thee I come
'To soothe thy cares—not to unfold thy doom,
'That secret lies beyond the realm of light,
'Far in the womb of fate, and wrapt in night,
'To heights of future scenes in vain we soar,
'The sole fix'd privilege of eternal pow'r.
'No more I know, but that to-morrow's ray
'Is doom'd to finish this contended sway;
'Thee I behold, with anxious cares oppprest,
'Alone to heav'n resign thy pious breast;
'Go then, and boldly meet the stern debate,
'Be still thyself, and leave the event to fate.
'With pious courage fraught thy fortune try,
'A fortune not unfavour'd by the sky.'
This said, the seraph swiftly wings his way,
Mounts through the spheres, and gains upon the day;
Full of the wond'rous scene, the monarch trod
Back to the camp his solitary road;

Alone unto the royal tent repairs,
And a short slumber overshades his cares.
From ocean now uprais'd, the god of day,
Mournful and slow pursues his airy way,
The fiery car the steeds reluctant roll,
Recoil, and scarce oppose the whirling pole,
Condense the vapours, not to feed the blaze,
Or add fresh fuel to decaying rays:
But that the beams might point oblique, nor gild,
Direct the horrors of so dire a field.
Now from Falkirk, by Fortha's winding coast,
In dreadful order moves the South'ron host;
Men, arms, and steeds, the mountains shade afar,
And valleys groan beneath the load of war.
Unfurl'd in air the golden banners play,
And clarions, drums, and trumpets, rouse the day.
Adjoining hills the loud alarms rebound,
And rocks and forests multiply the sound.
Great in the van, and awful as a god,
In gems and gold the mighty Edward rode,
Round him all sheath'd in mail a dreadful line,
Three thousand warriors on barb'd coursers shine.
Bold Gloster, and Bohun a martial knight,
Oxford and Kent, and Hertford, guard the right.
The left obeys sly Omphraville's commands,
Join'd by Corspatrick's and by Clifford's bands.
The troops from Belgium and from Gallia's coast,
Make up the centre of the martial host:
Monmouth, O'Neil, and Desmont, next appear,
And with united squadrons guard the rear,
The quiver'd bands around the flanks dispos'd,
On either sides the moving battles clos'd;
In pompous order thus the num'rous train,
Forward advances to the destin'd plain.
Thro' Bruce's host next ring the loud alarms,
And Caledonian trumpets sound to arms.
All o'er the camp the ready squadrons stand,
And wait impatient for their chief's command,
Forth from his tent advancing to the lines,
The daring monarch in bright armour shines;
A cheerful vigour sparkles in his eyes,
And o'er his face the martial terrors rise.

Blaz'd his strong corslet on his ample breast,
And nodded on his helm a bloody crest.
Fast by his thigh bright shone his flaming brand,
An axe of steel gleam'd in his better hand.
The legions joyful on their monarch stare,
And wonder at the godlike form of war,
The Grampian chiefs, array'd in warlike state,
With cheerful pomp upon their monarch wait,
And now to battle arms each loyal band,
And thick'ning squadrons form along the strand.
Glare in the van the bold Taezalian lines,
And at their head the noble Randolph shines.
Rang'd on the right the South'ron legions stood,
And on their front the fiery Edward rode.
With him experienc'd Boyd divides the sway,
Sent by the king to guide him thro' the day;
Before the west, upon the left appears,
Young Stewart, and Douglas joins his border spears,
The other chiefs their proper stations held;
But these the gen'ral leaders of the field.
Instructed last the rear in order stood,
And at their head the king unusual rode;
But whilst he views around the embattl'd war,
The gen'rous Keith supplies his master's care.
And now both hosts a mile divided sat,
A short and anxious interval of fate,
When great Caernarvon waves his awful hand,
And list'ning thousands round their monarch stand:
Then thus—'Behold my friends, our mighty pow'rs,
'From British climes conven'd, and foreign shores,
'Our sire's immortal laurels to maintain,
'And fix our conquests o'er the Grampian reign;
'Ev'n here yourselves before have often fought,
'And frequent ruin on the rebels brought.
'This day have we a mightier force array'd,
'Than e'er at once our sire's commands obey'd:
'You, then, who still with him victorious shone,
'Still conquer, nor degen'rate with the son.
'Behold, how thin appear yon dastard bands,
'Scarce half sufficient for our soldiers hands.
'Ev'n thousands here shall find no foe to slay,
'But idly share the triumphs of the day;

'Go then, my friends, attack the puny plain,
'And drive yon handful, scatter'd, to the main;
'Assert your own, assert your monarch's name,
'Let death or fetters crush yon rebel claim.'
He spoke—With mingled shouts resounds the air,
And all the eager troops demand the war.
Now the bold Bruce before the centre stands,
And thus accosts his Caledonian bands:
'Fellows in arms! long did our sires oppose
'The haughty insults of ambitious foes;
'Long hath our country struggled with her fate,
'With Pictish fraud and Saxons savage hate;
'These, too, supported by Ausonian pow'rs,
'How did the mighty ruin spread her shores!
'What seas of blood, what mountains of the slain,
'Chock'd every vale, and strew'd each purple plain!
'Thus fell our sires, or drove by sword and flame,
'Fled far; and Scotia scarce remain'd a name,
'Yet Heav'n, relenting Heav'n, beheld her fate,
'And arm'd the great restorer of the state;
'From frozen climes, and Scythia's distant strand,
'* The godlike man collects the scatter'd band.
'He came, he conquer'd, and her right restor'd,
'Doom'd to the sway, and Albion's fated lord.
'Pictish and Saxon spoils his triumph grace,
'These banish'd, those a quite extinguish'd race.
'Next from the north where Baltic billows rave,
'And Cimbrian rocks the foamy tempests lave,
'Against our sires advance the swarming train,
'Our hardy sires, undaunted, take the plain:
'Let wond'ring Loncarty record the day,
'And to great Kenneth join the greater Hay.
'Let Malcolm next, and Keith's superior rage,
'And Barry's field run purple in the page:
'When Lochty's current, chok'd with tides of blood,
'Groan'd to the ocean in a crimson flood.
'For Scotia's right thus stood the Scots of old,
'Thus glare your fathers in recording gold;
'Such were their acts, and such their loyal fame,
'Such glories blaze around each deathless name,

* Fergus II. who restored the monarchy of Scotland, after it had been almost utterly extinguished by the Picts, Saxons, and Romans.

'And now, my friends, this day methinks I see
'Those noble patriots in their progeny;
'This day, the last of all our long debate,
'The fix'd, important period of our fate;
'How does yon king in gold and jewels glare,
'What pride of armies, and what pomp of war;
'Behold yon vast array, yon swarming host,
'How the extended legions cloud the coast?
'This hour, this instant hour, of fate demands
'Your fathers' souls and all your fathers' hands.
'We know the deeds of every doughty sire,
'Nor shall we doubt their hardy offspring's fire.
'Methinks I see great Graham undaunted go,
''Gainst Rome's proud eagles, and the Saxon foe.
'Here are his sons, behold the manly race,
'See how the father threatens in their face:
'Methinks I see the Douglas sire of old,
'Red from his toils, and resting on the mold;
'When the just prince inquir'd the hero's name,
'And Sholto Dow Glas pointed him to fame.
'Already mention'd, needless I run o'er
'The trophies by our sires obtain'd before;
'This glorious day shall ev'n eclipse their rage,
'And Bannockburn roll redder in the page.
'A new, a nobler aera shall unfold,
'And Scotia's sons shall stand in brighter gold.
'Pardon, my friends, that I the field delay,
'And stop with words the laurels of the day;
'That I retard the freedom of the state,
'Your glory, and my own propitious fate.
'Go on, brave Scots, and let each hero's fire
'Prove his bold lineage, and assert his sire;
'Scotia this day demands her ancient right,
''Tis Scotia arms her daring sons to fight.
'The pride, the hate, the tyranny, you know,
'And all the rage of yon relentless foe.
'Think, then, your wives and helpless infants stand,
'And weep for safety at each warrior's hand,
'Dear pledges; let their images remain
'Fix'd in your souls, and bear you through the plain:
'Let those soft ties of life, your better part,
'String ev'ry nerve, and steel each hero's heart;

'Through every scene of action point your way,
'And Heav'n propitious shall conduct the day.'
He spoke—and tears indignant swell'd their eyes,
And furious shouts to battle tore the skies.
But pious Bruce, in view of all the host,
Prone on the earth his suppliant body cast,
His hand apply'd unto his spotless breast,
And thus the father of the skies addrest:
'Immortal pow'r, whose sacred voice supreme,
'Spoke to existence this stupendous frame;
'Who sway'st the nations with thy dreadful nod,
'And crowns and trembling thrones confess thee God,
'If e'er with lips unfeign'd my vows I paid,
'If e'er my soul a pure oblation made:
'Regard my suff'rings past, attend my woes,
'And judge, O judge, this day the suppliant's cause.
'If I unrighteous fall before yon foe.
'From thee, submissive, I receive the blow.
'But if my right the Almighty's aid can claim,
'Aid thou, and teach me to adore thy name.'
The pious monarch thus, and all the bands,
With humble hearts, and with uplifted hands,
Devout, address the sov'reign pow'r on high,
Confess their guilt, and deprecate the sky.
This done, advancing from the South'ron train,
A knight in shining armour cross'd the plain,
His haughty mien, and his gigantic size,
At once attracted ev'ry warrior's eyes.
The hardy champion forth disdainful rode,
And in his left a lance enormous stood,
Approaching, he defies each Scotish knight,
And dares the bravest out to single fight;
Soon as the king the giant foe beheld,
Alone defy his legions on the field,
The steed he reins, and rushes o'er the strand,
An ax well temper'd charg'd his better hand,
Dauntless he rode to meet the champion's force,
And the proud knight begins his furious course,
Full at the monarch aims his length of spear,
Th' eluded weapon spends its strength in air,
The courser bore him on; but, as he past,
(Just where the plume stood nodding on the crest)

A forceful blow the monarch aims with skill,
Through helm and brain down rush'd the shining steel;
Prone fell the champion on the gory strand,
And the stern visage threaten'd on the sand.
This saw both hosts, and from th' important sight,
Each takes the omen of the future fight,
Returns the king—his worth each bosom fires,
And ev'ry leader to his post retires.
And now both armies for the fight prepare,
And shriller clangors animate the war,
Drums, trumpets, clarions, blend their warlike noise,
Ring through the air, and echo through the skies:
Woods, vales, and mountains, the alarm rebound,
And heav'n and earth appear'd involv'd in sound.
Say, sacred nine! the dreadful scene relate,
And paint the wonders of this day of fate,
Approach the foe. Ten thousand Gloster heads,
Ten thousand more the hardy Hertford leads,
Full on the Scotish right they shape their way,
Where Edward's legions lin'd the hollow bay;
The hollow bay, thick set with piles before,
And with fictitious turf dissembled o'er.
Arm'd on rich steeds the South'ron thither bound,
And plunge at once into the faithless ground.
Five thousand whole lay wallowing on the shore,
And sharpen'd pikes five thousand coursers gore;
Edward to war his infantry commands,
Rush the fierce foot amidst th' entangled bands,
Their fiery leader thunders at their head,
And fast around the wid'ning slaughter spread,
Warriors and steeds lay in one ruin mix'd,
By craft ingulf'd, and secret piles transfix'd;
The rest affrighted, from the fatal coast,
Confus'dly flying, join'd the distant host.
Again in air the South'ron banners play,
And fifty thousand issue to the day:
The hardy Monmouth heads his Cimbrian force,
And Oxford joins his Trinobantian horse;
To meet those battles dauntless Edward goes,
But looks for aid against such odds of foes;
Nor long expects before his hardy lines,
Soon at his side the noble Randolph shines.

In quick battalia form'd each adverse train,
With double courage commenc'd the second plain,
Together fast the burst of battle goes,
And to the skies the shouts tremendous rose,
As when loud winds the foamy surges sweep,
And from its caverns tear the bellowing deep;
Or as fierce flames their crackling torrents pour,
Thro' mountain forests, and the shades devour;
Just with such rage the hosts together bound,
Just so the clamours through the heav'ns resound.
Soon as the clash of spears obscures the air,
At once unsheath'd the gleamy faulchions glare.
From clashing arms the blendid sparkles blaze,
And blushing torrents from a crimson maze.
Here haughty Monmouth thunders in his might,
There hardy Oxford animates the fight:
In vain, see where fierce Edward swims in gore,
And Randolph's mighty arm lays waste the shore.
See where the spreading ruins of the slain,
Thicken and grow, and widen o'er the plain,
Incline the South'ron ranks, nor longer dare
Oppose the fury of the Grampian war;
Monmouth and Oxford see these troops give way,
And pierc'd with wounds themselves forsake the day.
Retreat the legions to the gen'ral host,
And twenty thousand lifeless strew the coast;
The Scots soon rally, and their standards join,
And the form'd troops again in order shine.
  Doubly repuls'd, now all the South'ron war,
Fir'd with resentment, for the field prepare,
In gold array'd and blazing diamonds bright;
The mighty king rode foremost to the fight,
Three thousand knights in mail severely gay,
Rich on barb'd steeds conduct him to the day;
The long extended legions fill the train,
And crowding nations thicken on the plain;
Aloft unfurl'd the gilded standards fly,
And all the pomp of battle strikes the sky,
Where Edward's legions and brave Randolph's stood
Rally'd, and reeking still with recent blood;
Array'd, the banded squadrons proudly fare
In all the dire magnificence of war.

Unequal match! but ere th' attack begun,
Amidst the chiefs the doughty Douglas shone.
Three thousand bord'rers his command obey,
Fresh to the field, and ardent for the day;
Him gallant Stewart in burnish'd armour joins,
And to the onset leads his western lines:
Heroic youth! nor had five lustres shed
Their circling seasons o'er his bloomy head.
The charge begins. The hosts together bound,
And steeds and warriors tumble on the ground.
The crashing spears in clouds of splinters rise,
Fierce thund'ring noise, deep groans and mingled cries
Ring round the forest; echoing rocks reply,
And all the war redoubles in the sky,
The monarch's steely guards amidst the fight,
On Edward's legions pour their awful might.
Edward as furious meets the iron train,
And heads and helmets ring against the plain,
Hibernian foot, and Gallia's warlike horse,
Toward the noble Randolph bend their course.
The noble Randolph 'gainst those squadrons rode,
And foreign gore soon swell'd the neighb'ring flood.
What wonders were by dreadful Douglas wrought,
And ev'n young Stewart not undistinguish'd fought.
But Omphraville, in arts of war long skill'd,
Draws forth the South'ron bowmen to the field.
Rang'd to th' attack, full fifty thousand cane,
That drank the Tine and Humber's tumbling stream;
From twangling yews the whizzing tempests fly,
And clouds of feather'd fates obscure the sky.
By this the Hyperion on his radiant car,
Flam'd in the zenith of the middle sphere;
And now th' unerring balances on high,
Fram'd of pure gold, depended from the sky;
The work of art divine, to weigh the fates
Of rival monarchs, and contending states;
Impartial Heav'n's decrees ordain'd to prove,
And fix th' eternal equity above:
Bright in the azure vault the balance shone,
And British fates in either side are thrown,
Sinking more pond'rous, Scotia's lots prevail,
High mounts in air, o'erpois'd the South'ron scale.

Meanwhile the king, nor yet engag'd, beheld
The bold encounters on the various field,
Joyful had view'd his glorious leaders' fight,
In all the terrors of their father's might;
But now at last perceives the quiver'd pow'r,
By crafty Omphraville well known before,
Rang'd on the hostile flanks in order glare,
And gall with distant wounds the Scotish war.
To arms he calls, and tribe by tribe draws forth,
Array'd to battle the intrepid north;
Himself before the squadrons takes the plain,
And Hay, and Keith, and Gordon, fill the train;
His troops M'Kenzie to M'Donald joins,
And all the war in Scythian armour shines;
The dales around Hebridian axes gild,
And bossy bucklers glimmer o'er the field.
Detach'd before the noble marischal rode,
To quell the fury of the archer crowd;
Two thousand spears obey the chief's commands,
Fiercely they rush amidst the quiver'd bands.
The bold detachment dealt destruction round,
Bows, shafts, and warriors, mingling on the ground,
Not able to sustain their awful might,
Back to the rear the archers wing their flight.
By this the king, majestically great,
Shines in the centre of the day of fate,
Stern terrors rising brood upon his brows,
And in his looks the god of battle glows;
Quick round the field his piercing eye-balls glare,
At once directed through each scene of war,
Then as the thunder bursting from on high,
Drives through the gather'd wreck, and sweeps the sky,
While clouds dissolv'd in mighty torrents pour,
The sounding ruin round the delug'd shore;
So rush'd the monarch 'midst the thickest fight,
And flam'd in all the wonders of his might.
Gods! how his rage the wid'ning havoc spread,
How thick around him rose the growing dead!
What tides of rolling gore, from ranks o'erthrown,
Unite and swell, and deeper float the lawn;
The lawns! that late fresh crown'd with verdure lay,
Now groan with death, and wave a purple sea.

The distant war, astonish'd stops its course,
And wond'ring view'd his more than mortal force;
The hardy north's undaunted sons engage,
And second through the field their monarch's rage;
The foreign troops amaz'd, for flight prepare,
And ev'n the great Caernarvon dreads the war;
But Omphraville collects the stagg'ring lines,
And at their head once more that leader shines.
Bold Giles, the Argentine renown'd in fame,
And long in foreign fields a dreadful name,
Recalls the Belgian and the Gallic horse,
And joins to Omphraville the rally'd force.
Th' Scotish battles distant on the field,
Th' assembled foes fresh rendezvous beheld;
From diff'rent quarters their whole troops combine,
And all at once the monarch's standard join.
The monarch takes the van, and all his pow'r
Upon the foe with dreadful fury bore,
On them the hardy foe as furious bound,
Deep groan'd beneath the shock the trembling ground,
The mighty clash of arms resounds in air,
And mountains echo to the din of war.
How did the Bruce in all his dread array,
Renew the former wonders of the day;
His rage through ev'ry scene of battle ran,
Flam'd on the flanks, or light'ned in the van.
Gods! how fierce Edward urg'd the stern debate,
From his bold hand what warriors met their fate;
In vain the Gallic chief oppos'd his pow'r,
Breathless by him extended on the shore.
This Belgiam saw, and Gaul's astonish'd horse,
And fled disorder'd from his dreadful force;
Bold Douglas, Randolph, Stewart, exert their might,
Thunder through death, and drive the scatter'd fight.
Their rage no more sustains the hostile band,
All disarray'd and reeling on the strand.
And now the sun had shot a fainter ray,
His car declining to the western sea;
When from the heights descend the Scotish swains;
The foe beheld afresh the cover'd plains,
They gaze some time astonish'd at the sight,
When all at once precipitate their flight.

His armies routed, and his honour lost,
The great Caernarvon leaves the bloody coast;
To where loud billows beat Dunbar's rough shores
He flies, and Douglas drives the scatter'd pow'rs.
By sea at last he gains his native sway,
Dead in the chace three thousand victims lay.
Of hostile corpses (dreadful to relate),
Full fifty thousand gorg'd the field of fate.
Four hundred spurs of gold Equestrian spoils,
Part grace and part reward the Grampian toils;
There Typont fell, and Gloucester the brave,
From Bruce's gen'rous bounty found a grave.
There the bold Argentine's fam'd laurels fade,
Mix'd with the ruins of the vulgar dead.
The Argentine, who never knew to yield,
And scorn'd to fly inglorious from the field,
In distant climes for martial toils renown'd,
And thrice his head with Pagan triumphs crown'd,
Four thousand Scotish warriors yield their breath,
Loyal in life, and glorious in their death;
Their weapons fell, and Ross renown'd of old,
But still in Scotia's annals live in gold.
While thrice the sun his course diurnal rolls,
And shades successive thrice involve the poles;
Still Bannockburn chok'd with a tide of gore,
Groan'd in deep murmurs to its ghastly shore.
Edward escap'd, bold Douglas led his host,
Back to victorious Bruce by Fortha's coast;
Conjoin'd, to Stirling march'd the laurel'd war,
And spoils of nations load each groaning car;
Vast troops of captive foes the pomp adorn'd,
And haughty chiefs in hostile fetters mourn'd;
Chiefs, who eftsoons by gen'rous Bruce dismist,
Restor'd his royal consort to his breast.

Moubray the fort surrenders, loyal grown,
And henceforth faithful to the Scotish crown.
Now glorious Bruce (all opposition quell'd,
Each faction crush'd, and ev'ry foe repell'd),
Throughout the provinces proclaims the sway,
At once the willing provinces obey;
From far Pomona's coast to Solway's shore,
Each subject loyal owns his sov'reign pow'r;

His friends rewarded, and his host dismist,
With bounty loaded, and with freedom blest;
Each office he invests with due command,
Dispenses laws, and constitutes the land.
No more dare foreign foes his right invade,
No more dares faction lift its rebel head,
No more the Grampian swain in battle bleeds,
But to the sword the peaceful rake succeeds;
The lab'ring hind, free from oppressive toil,
Turns the rich furrows of his native soil.
In freedom, peace, and plenty, wastes the day,
And all th' indulgence of a righteous sway.
No longer Caledonia now deplores
Her ruin'd cities, and her desert shores;
Her cities round their ancient splendour gain,
And golden harvests wave on ev'ry plain;
At home rever'd, abroad diffus'd by fame,
Through distant climes resounds the Brucian name.
Thus far the muse, in unambitious strains,
Hath sung the monarch sweating on the plains.
Immers'd in ills, with perils long beset,
(Glorious in patience, and resign'dly great!)
Till by degrees he gain'd upon his foes,
Grew in distress, and on his dangers rose.
Triumphant 'midst the spoils of nations shone,
And now unrival'd mounts his native throne;
Where regal ore and gems his brows infold,
And everlasting laurels shade the gold.
While circling spheres their endless round shall run,
And feel the genial influence of the sun;
While earth shall daily on her axle roll,
And the slow wain attend the freezing pole;
While monthly moons their revolutions keep,
By turns shall raise, and sink by turns the deep;
While Fortha spacious rolls her winding waves,
And Tay's rich stream Ænian borders laves:
Still dear to Albion be her Bruce's fame,
Sacred his merit, and rever'd his name.
So may just Heav'n maintain her ancient crown,
And Banquho's race for ever fill her throne:
May both ye gods! one final period know,
That cease to rule, and Fortha cease to flow.

THE END.