

III.

The Fife Laird, a popular appeal to promote industry and economy in Scotland.

THIS poetical lesson, in the same strain with the argument of Paterson's short essays of 1705, and with his illustration of the lesson from the case of a Laird of Orkney, proves that his doctrine had zealous advocates, if he did not himself write these verses. They are forcible, and not without the humour and poetical spirit often shewn in his prose. But beyond this slight coincidence, the suggestion of an author for the poem of "The Fife Laird," has no ground. Copies of two editions of it are preserved in the Advocates' Library (Tracts in folio, vol. 8, and in octavo, vol. 593), so that the good principles here inculcated are seen to have been as acceptable to the people who read these *chap* rhymes as the reasoning of Paterson's Essays was persuasive in the Parliament House in Edinburgh, among peers and grave deputies.

THE SPEECH OF A FYFE LAIRD NEWLY COME FROM GRAVE.

What accident, what strange mishap,
Awakes me from my heavenly nap?
What spirit? what Godhead by the lave,
Hath raised my body from the grave?
It is an hundred years almost
Since I was buried in the dust:
And now I think that I am living,
Or else, but doubt, my brains are raving;
Yet do I feel (while as I study)
The faculties of all my body:
I taste, I smell, I touch, I hear,
I find my sight exceeding clear:
Then I'm alive! yea sure I am,
I know it by my corp'ral frame.
But in what part, where I can be,
My wavering brain yet tortures me.
Once I was called a great Fyfe laird,
I dwelt not far from the Hall-yard.
But who enjoys my land and plough,
My castle and my fine cole-heugh;
I can find out no living man
Can tell me this, do what I can.
Yet, if my memory serve me well,
This is the shyre where I did dwell:
This is the part where I was born:
For, lo! beneath me stands Kinghorn:
And there about, the Lowmond Hill,
Stands as it stood, yet ever still.
There is Brunteisland, Aberdore.
I see Fyff's coast along the shore.
Yes I am right, for my life,
This is my native country Fyff.
O! but it's long and many a year,
Since last my feet did travel here.
I find great change in old lairds' places,
I know the ground, but not the faces.
Where shall I turn me first about,
For my acquaintance is worn out?
O, this is strange, that even in Fyff,
I do not know neither man nor wife,
No earl, no lord, no laird, no people,
But Lesly and the Mark Inch steeple.
Old noble Weems, and that is all,
I think enjoy their fathers' hall.
For from Dunfermling to Fyff's-ness
I do know none that doth possess
His grandsyre's castles and his towers;
All is away that once was ours.
I'm full of wrath, I scorn to tarrie,
I know them no more than the fairie.
But I admire and marvel strange,
What is the cause of this great change?
I hear a murmuring report,
Passing amongst the common sort:
For some says this, and some says that,
And others tell I know not what.
Some says the Fyff laird, ever rues
Since they began to take the Lews:
That bargain first did brew their baile,
As tells the honest men of Craill.
Some doth ascribe the supplantation
Unto the lawyers' congregation.
No, but this is a false suppose,
For all things wyts that well not goes.
Be what it will, there is some source
Hath bred this universal curse:
This transmigration and earthquake,
That caused the lairds of Fyff to break.
He that enthrones a shepherdling;
He that dethrones a potent king,
And he that makes a cotter laird
The barron's bairns to delve a yard.
Almighty, He that shakes the mountains,
And brings great rivers from small fountains,
It is the power of His hand,
That makes both lords and lairds have land!
Yet there may be, as all men knows,
An evident and well seen cause;
A publick and a common evil,
What made the meikle master Devil,
To cast his club all Fyff throughout,

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