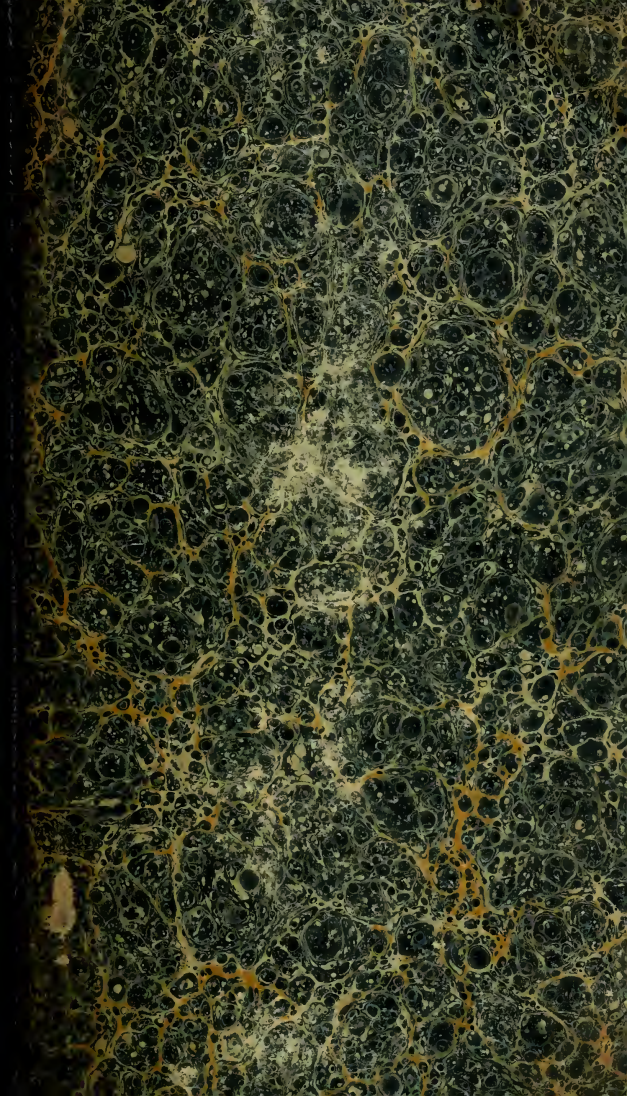
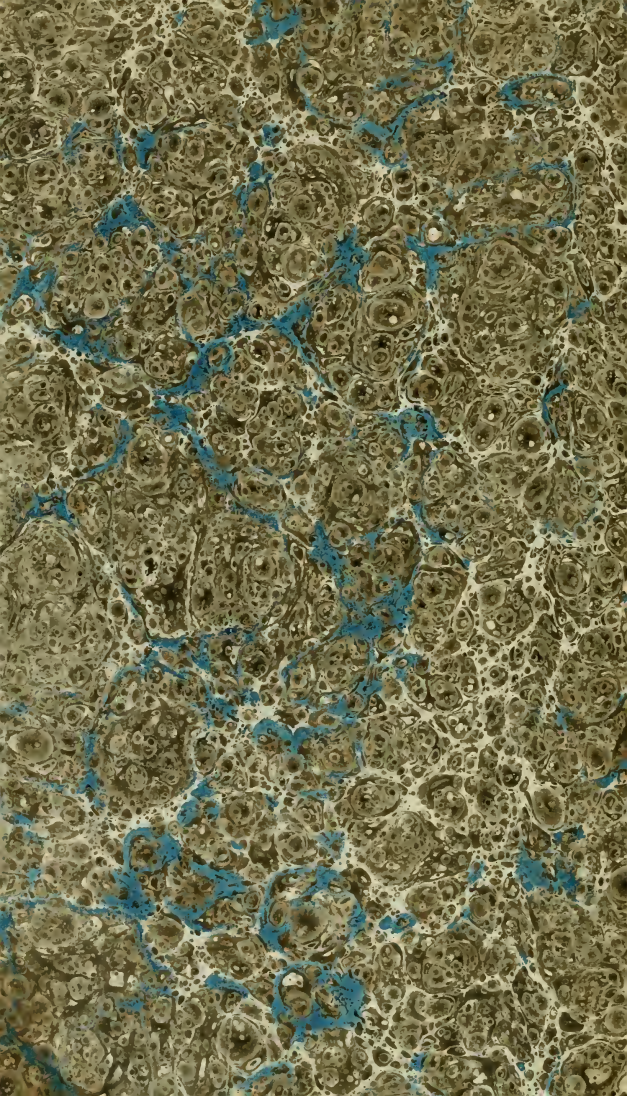
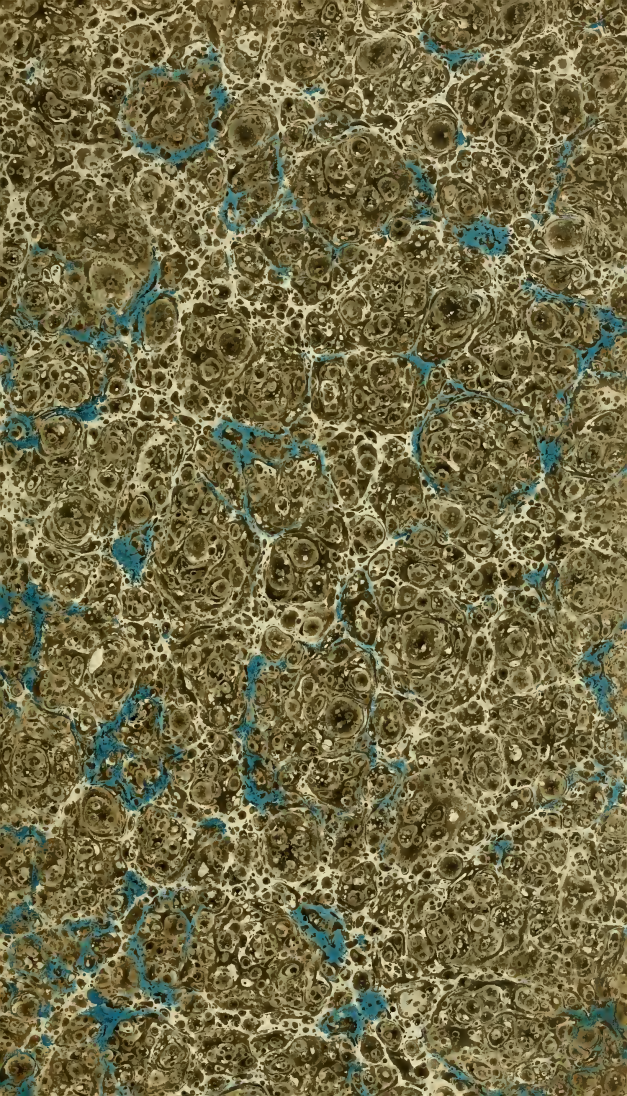








Campbell 2. d. 15
Mr. Francis Campbell



C. E. Coleridge.

to his friend

J. G. Campbell.

1839







ALLAN RAMSAY.

*From an Original Drawing by his Son the late
Allan Ramsay, Painter to His Majesty -*

THE
P O E M S
OF
ALLAN RAMSAY.

A NEW EDITION,
CORRECTED, AND ENLARGED;
WITH A GLOSSARY.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
FROM AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS:
AND REMARKS ON HIS POEMS,
FROM A LARGE VIEW OF THEIR MERITS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by A. Strahan, Printers Street,
FOR T. CADELL JUN. AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1800.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

IN offering this Edition of the Poems of Ramsay to the world, the Publishers beg leave to submit what they hope will be allowed to give this a preference to any former edition.

Some poems have been now added, which had escaped the diligence of former Collectors; and the whole book has been thrown into a new, and, they trust, a better arrangement.

They have endeavoured to ornament this Edition with such embellishments, as they presumed would be welcome to every reader: there is prefixed a portrait of the author, which has been finely engraved by Mr. Ryder, from a drawing which was made by Allan Ramsay, the poet's son; the original of which is now in the possession of A. F. Tytler, Esq. of Edinburgh: there is added, as a tail-piece, an engraving of the rustic temple which has been dedicated by that gentleman, who happily possesses the supposed scene of the *Gentle Shepherd*, to the *place*, and *poet*. Curiosity must, naturally,

naturally, be gratified, by the accurate *fac simile* of the hand-writing of such an author, which is now first presented to the public.

It is understood, that Allan Ramsay, the painter, left some account of his father for publication : but it is hoped, that the Public will be full as well pleased with the perusal of the *Life* of the Author, and the *Remarks* on his Poems, which have been written by the neutral pen of a stranger.

☞ *The Bookbinder is desired to place the Fac-simile, at the End of the Life.*

THE
L I F E
OF
ALLAN RAMSAY.

WHILE History employs her peculiar powers, in developing the intrigues of statesmen, in adjusting the disputes of nations, and in narrating the events of war, Biography busies her analogous pen in tracing the progress of letters, in ascertaining the influence of manners, and in appreciating literary characters. The pursuits of History must be allowed to be most dignified ; the employment of Biography is most pleasing : it is the business of History to record truth, and to inculcate wisdom ; it is the duty of Biography to pay just tributes of respect, and praise, to genius, to knowledge, and to virtue.

In every age, and in every nation, individuals have arisen, whose talents, and labours, merited the notice, and the remembrance, of the biographer ; although in some periods, and among some tribes, the tumults of barbarity allowed little leisure, or security, for collecting anecdotes, and arranging documents, had learning existed to record, and detail them. Among other civilized nations, North Britain has produced her full share of genius to be admired, of knowledge to be learned, and of virtue to be imitated. It has, however, been conceived by ignorance, and asserted by dogmatism, that Scotland did not produce, in the century, which elapsed in 1715, any person, except Burnet, who is worthy of biographical notice ; although, in fact, she did produce, in that period, men who were distinguished for their jurisprudence *, for their science and learning †, for their bravery ‡, and for their

* The Lord President Lockart, the Lord President Gilmour, the Lord President Stair.

† James Gregory was born in 1639 ; David Gregory in 1661 ; John Keil was born in 1670 ; and James Keil in 1673 ; Colin McLaurin in 1698.—“ the Latin Poetry of ‘ Deliciæ Poetarum Scotorum,’” says Johnson, “ would have done “ honour to any country.”—At the end of the seventeenth century, followed Ruddiman.

‡ The Marquis of Montrose, and Lord Dundee.

their wit *. It was also in that century, which was thus branded by malignity for its infertility of talents, Scotland produced, during a happy moment, Allan Ramsay, her Doric poet, who claims the notice of biography; because he raised himself to distinction by his talents, and pleased others, by the perusal of his poetry; while he derived a benefit to himself, by his powers of pleasing.

A zealous genealogist could easily trace Ramsay to the family of the Earl of Dalhousie. His father was Robert Ramsay, who inherited, as it were, the management of Lord Hopton's lead mines in Crawford-moor; his grandfather was Robert Ramsay, a writer in Edinburgh, who had the management of the same mines; his great-grandfather was Captain John Ramsay, the son of Ramsay of Cockpen, who was a brother of Ramsay of Dalhousie. Of this genealogy our poet speaks proudly, when he recollects

Dalhousie of an auld descent,
My chief, my stoup, my ornament.

His mother was Alice Bower, whose father had been brought from Derbyshire, to instruct Lord Hopton's

* Dr. Pitcairn, and Dr. Arbuthnot.

Hopton's miners in their art; his grandmother was Janet Douglas, a daughter of Douglas of Muthil: and our bard was careful to remember, with the exultation of genius, that

He was a poet sprung from a Douglas loin.

He was born on the 15th of October 1686, in the upper ward of Lanarkshire. Ramsay has himself described the place of his birth with picturesque minuteness:

Of Craufurd-moor, born in Lead hill,
Where mineral springs Glengonir fill,
Which joins sweet flowing Clyde,
Between auld Craufurd-Lindsay's towers,
And where Deneetnie rapid pours
His stream through Glotta's tide *.

The learned minister, who writes the account of the parish of Crawford-moor, claims no peculiar honour, from the birth of Ramsay, in that mountainous district. In these wilds, did our bard remain during fifteen years, deriving from the parish schoolmaster such lore as he possessed, and learning from experience,

How halefome 'tis to snuff the cawler air,
And all the sweets it bears, when void of care.

But

* Ramsay's petition to the Whin-bush Club.

But this felicity did not last long. His first misfortune consisted in losing, while he was yet an infant, his father, who died before he had himself passed his five-and-twentieth year; and his next unhappiness arose from the marriage of his mother, soon after the death of his father, to Mr. Chrington, one of the very small land-holders of the country, which is occupied by the great families of Hamilton, and Douglas. These sad events left Ramsay without property, or the means of procuring any. And while Scotland was not yet busied with manufactures, nor enriched by commerce, the best resource, which occurred to his relations, who had other objects of affection, was to bind him an apprentice to a wig-maker*.

With

* Some writers have said, that Ramsay was a barber, because he was a wig-maker, considering the two trades as co-incident in that age. That Ramsay, when he entered life, was a wig-maker, is certain, from his frequent admissions, and from the parish register, which records the baptism of his children; and which calls him a periwig-maker, in 1713, in 1714, in 1715, and in 1716. He was a burgher of Edinburgh, not by birth, but by service as an apprentice to a wig-maker:

Born to nae lairdship, mair's the pity!
Yet denison of this fair city.

With this design, Ramsay was sent to Edinburgh in 1701, during the fifteenth year of his age. Had he behaved amiss as an apprentice, we should have heard of his misconduct, when he was attacked, as a writer, by those, who spared none of the asperities of reproach. The silence of a fatirical enemy an author may well enjoy as praise.

Ramsay was now to enter into life, with an honest trade, and a fair character, for his livelihood. And he was induced, as much by his sociability of temper as by the example of other citizens, to
marry,

There are neither facts, nor circumstances, which intimate, that he was a barber; on the other hand, the satirists, who were studious to collect every topic of degradation, when facts were known, never call him a barber. The wig-makers do not form any of the forty-two corporations of that city.—[Maitland's Hist. Ed. 313, 14.] When the surgeons and barbers were conjointly incorporated in 1505, it was established as a bye-law, that none shall act as a barber who was not free of that craft.—[Ib. 297.] In 1682, the surgeons threw off the barbers, who, however, remained dependant on them till 1722: but the town council recommended to the surgeons to supply the citizens with a sufficient number of qualified persons to shave and cut hair.—[Ib. 296.] In 1722, the barbers were separated from the surgeons, and formed into a corporate body with exclusive privileges.—[Ib. 313, 14.] The investigation of this point is of no other importance than that it is always interesting to detect error, and ever pleasing to propagate truth.

marry, in 1712, Christian Ross, the daughter of an inferior lawyer in Edinburgh. In the subsequent year, she brought him his eldest son Allan, who inherited his father's genius, and rose to eminence both as a painter, and a scholar. For several years, she brought him a child every twelvemonth; a fruitfulness this, of which the poet delighted to boast. The same disposition for sociability prompted him to court the society of clubs, during a clubical period. Among his poems he has left a petition for admittance into the Whin-bush Club, a society of gentlemen of Lanarkshire, who met partly to enjoy the pleasure of mirth, perhaps as much to exercise the beneficence of charity to indigent persons of the same shire. The petitioner founds his claim on the place of his nativity :

By birth my title's fair,
To bend wi' ye, and spend wi' ye
An evening, and gaffaw.

Our poet's passion for gaffaw, or social laughter, has induced malignant witticism to speak of Ramsay as "a convivial buffoon *."

It was an age of clubs, when Ramsay began to enter into life, with a strong desire to give, and to receive,

* Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, vol. i. p. 132.

receive, the pleasures of conviviality. In May 1712, there was established at Edinburgh the Easy Club, consisting of young men, who possessed talents, and vivacity, and who wished to pass stated evenings in free conversation, and social mirth. Of this club, Ramsay appears to have been an original member * : and as the fundamental constitution of it required, that each member should assume some characteristic name, he chose, though I know not with what propriety, the well-known appellation of Isaac Bickerstaff. After a while, the Easy Club, affecting great independence, resolved to adopt Scottish patrons, in place of English names : Ramsay now chose for his new denomination the more poetical name of Gawin Douglas. Our representative of the learned Bishop of Dunkeld, the Scottish translator of Virgil, occasionally amused the Club with appropriate poetry : and, on the 2d of February 1715, he was chosen poet-laureat to the club, whose hilarity, however, was suppressed by the rebellion of 1715. One of its last acts, on the 12th of May, was to declare, “ that Dr. Pitcairn, “ and Gawin Douglas [Ramsay], having behaved “ themselves three years as good members of this “ club, were adjudged to be gentlemen †.” From
this

* I quote the MS. transactions of the Easy Club.

† MS. transactions of the Easy Club.

this declaration, we may easily perceive, what is indeed apparent on their recorded transactions, that Ramsay regarded his attendance on the club, as part of the business of life; while his associates, as they were young, had their studies to prosecute, and their establishments to form.

As a juvenile poet, Ramsay has left nothing which could bring to our recollection the infantine performances of Cowley, Milton, or Pope, who lisped in numbers, at the dawn of life. Ramsay only began to read poetry in his twentieth year, to feel the influence of emulation, and to lay the foundation of his fame, and fortune *. He first
began

* In one of his epistles to Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Ramsay tells him :

When I begoud first to cun verse,
And cou'd your Ardry Whins rehearse,
Where Bonny Heck ran fast and fierce,
It warm'd my breast;
Then emulation did me pierce,
Whilk since ne'er ceast.

“ The last dying words of Bonny Heck,” a famous greyhound, which was written by Wanton Willie, the poet just mentioned, was first published in 1706, in the Choice Collection of Scots Poems, by Watson. As Ramsay was born in 1686, he was now twenty. It is curious to remark, that the Epitaph on Habbie Simpson, which was published by Watson in the
same

began to write in 1711; for in his letter to Smibert, the painter, he says,

Frae twenty-five to five and-forty,
My muse was neither sweer nor dorty.

Yet, his earliest production, which is at present known, was presented by him, in 1712, to “The most happy members of the Easy Club:”—

Were

same Collection, was deemed by Ramsay, when he began to read poetry, the standard of perfection: for he praised his correspondent Hamilton, as having, in his poetical performances,

——hit the spirit to a tittle,
Of standard Habby.

The reading of Ramsay was soon extended to the poetry of very different masters; of Dryden and Addison, of Prior and Pope. When the noblest version of the Iliad appeared, in 1718, Ramsay read it over thrice; and thereupon addressed an ode to Pope, which was, no doubt, welcome to a mind, that was not insensible to flattery; and which discreetly concluded:

Henceforward I'll not tempt my fate
On dazzling rays to stare,
Lest I should tine dear self-conceit,
And read and write nae mair.

It is easy to trace, in the poetry of Ramsay, how much he improved his original powers by such poetical studies: we may see, in some of his English pieces, after “he had three times “read the Iliad o’er,” a facility of versification, and a flow of numbers, which Ramsay owed to the school of Pope.

Were I but a prince or king,
I 'de advance ye, I 'de advance ye ;
Were I but a prince or king,
So highly 's I 'de advance ye.
Great sense and wit are ever found
'Mong you always for to abound,
Much like the orbs that still move round,
No ways constrain'd, but easy.
Were I, &c.

Most of what 's hid from vulgar eye,
Even from earth's centre to the sky,
Your brighter thoughts do clearly spy,
Which makes you wise and easy.
Were I, &c.

Apollo's self unknown attends,
And in good humour re-ascends
The fork't Parnassus, and commends
You for being blyth and easy.
Were I, &c.

All faction in the church or state,
With greater wisdom still you hate,
And leave learn'd fools these to debate ;
Like rocks in seas ye 're easy.
Were I, &c.

May all you do successful prove,
And may you never fall in love
With what 's not firm for your behoof,
Or may make you uneasy.
Were I, &c.

I love ye well—O! let me be
One of your blyth society,
And, like yourselves, I 'll strive to be
Ay humorous and easy.
Were I, &c.

While he was yet unknown to fame, and unpractised in the art of book-making, our poet-laureat made use of the Easy Club, as a convenient place of publication. In this familiar society, he produced his satirical elegy on Maggy Johnston; which, with similar poems, he soon after revised, and published. In the club too, he read an elegy on the death of the celebrated Dr. Pitcairn, who died in 1713; which, though printed by the club, was rejected by the author, when he re-published his poems, because it was at once political, and personal; and he perhaps regarded it merely as—

—— the moanings of an infant muse,
Who wants its nurse: he's gone who did infuse
In us the principles of wit and sense.

From the year 1715, our poet seems to have paid less attention to his amusement, and more regard to his interest. He wrote many petty poems, which from time to time he published, at a proportionate price. In this form, his poetry was at that time attractive: and the women of Edinburgh

burgh were wont to fend out their children, with a penny, to buy “Ramfay’s last piece.” After a while, he attracted, by his facility, and naturalness, the notice of persons of higher rank, and better taste. He was, indeed, diligent to gain friends by panegyrics, and attentive to lose none by his satire; as his satiric muse properly confined her reprehensions to crimes, and not to persons.

On those principles, he published, about the year 1716, the “Christ’s Kirk on the Green,” a ludicrous poem of James I. of Scotland; “from an old manuscript collection of Scots poems, wrote an hundred and fifty years ago.” This allusion is obviously to the well-known collection of Scottish poetry by Bannatyne. Ramfay had confidence enough in his own powers, to add a second canto; and “this second part having stood its ground, he was induced to keep a little more company with those comical characters,” by adding a third canto. The three cantos were by Ramfay published together in 1718. Such was their popular reception, that the fifth edition of them was published, in 1722. Whether Ramfay critically understood the poetical language of the royal poet, I know not: but he certainly published, without a commentary, what has puzzled all the commentators; though king James’s ludicrous language

language may have been understood by the vulgar, who did not fetch their knowledge from so distant a source *.

On the same principles, Ramsay entered with several persons into a poetical intercourse of letters, which will be seen under the head of his epistolary poems. He found, in William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, a genius analogous to his own, who having congenial propensities, readily entered into a reciprocation of metrical epistles. This gentleman, who was a son of Hamilton of Ladylands, went early into the army, and became distinguished, during his latter days, by the title of “the lieutenant.” He was one of the chief contributors to Watson’s “Choice Collection.” After amusing

* Ramsay prefixed, as a motto, a couplet from “the maist reverend Virgil” of Gawin Douglas :

Consider it werly, rede efter than anys,
Weil at ane blenk sle poetry not tane is.

As if this language were not sufficiently obscure, our editor wittily caused this couplet to be printed in Greek types, with blundering inaccuracy : from that time to the present the blunders have been continued, as the meaning was misunderstood.—[See vol. i. p. 239.] The truth is, that the powers of the Greek letters are inadequate to convey the sound, and sense, of Gawin Douglas’s Scottish.

ing himself with Ramsay, he produced, in 1722, a new edition of “the Life of Wallace;” wherein the old words were modernized, and the original narrative was paraphrased. By this performance, which was published by subscription, he lost much of his character with persons of taste: he vitiated the facts by his paraphrase, and perverted the language of Blind Harry by his alterations. From Gilbertfield, whence he sent out this injudicious work, he removed to Letterick in Lanarkshire, where he died in August 1751, at a very advanced age. This person must be distinguished from Hamilton of Bangour, a contemporary poet of a higher quality, who was also connected, by his good offices, with Ramsay.

Meantime, our poet busied himself, in collecting into one volume his various poems, which he published, in the dignified form of a quarto, during the year 1721, when the poet was thirty-five. This volume began with “The Morning Interview;” and ended with “The Conclusion,” after the manner of Horace “Ad Librum suum:”

——— Gae spread my fame;
Away, and fix me an immortal name:
Ages to come shall thee revive,
And gar thee wi’ new honours live.

His

His popularity, at this epoch, may be inferred from the numerous list of subscribers, which consisted of all, who were either eminent, or fair, in Scotland. It is supposed that, by this volume, which Ruddiman printed, the poet acquired four hundred guineas. Several copies of commendatory verses, which were prefixed, necessarily tended to promote his profit, and to spread his praise. Among those panegyrics, the most prominent was Josiah Burchet, who died in October 1746, after he had sat in six parliaments, and been secretary of the admiralty for almost half a century *. By Sir William Scot of Thirlestone, Baronet, who was a contemporary Latin poet of no inconsiderable powers, Ramsay was placed in the temple of Apollo †.

Buoyed

* Gent. Mag. 558. Burchet left behind him a "History of the Navy," which is now nearly forgotten. This gentleman seems to have been greatly captivated by Ramsay's muse :

Go on, fam'd bard, the wonder of our days,
And crown thy head with never-fading bays ;
While grateful Britons do thy lines revere,
And value as they ought their Virgil here.

† See the "Selecta Poemata" of Dr. Pitcairn, Sir William Scot, and Thomas Kincaid, which were published by Freebairn
in

Buoyed up by such flattery from friends, our poet seems to have disregarded his enemies, as unworthy of his notice: “ I have been honoured
“ with three or four satires; but they are such,
“ that several of my friends allege I wrote them
“ myself, to make the world believe I have no
“ foes but fools *.”

To this volume was prefixed a print of Ramsay, by Smibert, who drew his first breath in the Grass Market of Edinburgh, the son of a dyer, and was bred a coach-painter: but travelling into Italy for instruction, he painted portraits, on his return, at London, till he was induced, by the fascination of bishop Berkeley, to emigrate with him to Bermudas, and thence to New England. Smibert was born, in 1684, and died at Boston, in 1751.

The success of Ramsay, we may easily suppose, did not lessen his desire of profit, nor diminish his emulation

in 1727, and re-published by Millar in 1729, p. 127. “ Effigies
“ Allani Ramsæi, pœtæ Scoti, inter cæteras pœtarum imagi-
“ nes, in templo Apollinis suspensa.” The learned and elegant Sir William Scot, of Thirlestane, died at Edinburgh on the 8th of October 1725.

* The preface to the 4to of 1721.

emulation of fame. He produced his Fables and Tales in 1722; his Tale of Three Bonnets in 1722; and his Fair Assembly in 1723; his poem on Health in 1724, while he still lived at the sign of the Mercury, in the great street of Edinburgh, opposite to the Cross Well. He, in the mean time, projected a publication, which promoted his interest, and spread his celebrity. Having already published Scots Songs, which were so well received, as to pass through a second edition, in 1719: in January 1724, he published the first volume of The Tea-Table Miscellany, a collection of songs, Scottish, and English. This little miscellany was dedicated—

To ilka lovely British lass,
Frae lady Charlotte, Anne, and Jean,
Down to ilk bonny finging Befs,
Wha dances barefoot on the green.

This volume was soon followed by a second. “Being assured,” says the collector, “how acceptable new words to known good tunes would prove, I engaged to make verses for above sixty of them, in these two volumes: about thirty were done by some ingenious young gentlemen, who were so well pleased with my undertaking, that they generously lent me their assistance.” The third volume of Celebrated Songs appeared in 1727, when the collector of them had commenced

commenced a bookseller by trade. Several years afterwards, a fourth volume was added to the Tea-Table Miscellany, though I know not if it were also collected by Ramsay. He complained, indeed, that Thomson, the publisher of the Orpheus Caledoneus, made use of his songs, without asking his consent, or acknowledging his obligations. The Tea-Table Miscellany ran through twelve editions, in a few years, owing to the great demand, from general approbation.

Ramsay had now felt the facility, and found the benefit, of compilation: and he took advantage of an opinion, which, in those days, prevailed in both the ends of our island, that none but poets could be the editors of poets. Rowe published an edition of Shakspeare in 1709; and not long afterwards Pope undertook, with more confidence than judgment, to give an edition of the same immortal dramatist. Thus incited, and encouraged, Ramsay published, in October 1724, *The Evergreen*, “being a collection of Scots poems, wrote by the “ingenious before 1600.” It seems to be universally agreed, that Ramsay failed in this difficult undertaking, as Pope also failed in a still more difficult work. “In making his compilation from “the Bannatyne MS.” says the late lord Hailes, “Ramsay has omitted some stanzas, and added

“ others ; has modernized the versification, and
“ varied the ancient manner of spelling.” Neither
Watson the printer, who published, in 1706,
“ A Choice Collection of Scots Poems ;” nor
Hamilton of Gilbertfield, when he re-published
Blind Harry’s Wallace ; nor Ramsay, when he
published his Evergreen, sufficiently adverted, that
if they changed the orthography, and modernized
the verse, the state of the language, and the nature
of the poetry, during former times, could no longer
be discovered. It may, I think, be allowed, that
Ramsay was not skilled in the ancient Scottish dia-
lect, as lord Hailes has suggested : he did not,
indeed, understand the language of his country, as
an antiquary ; yet, as a poet, he acquired, by the
performance of his task, a knowledge of ancient
versification ; he learned old words ; and he habi-
tuated himself to peculiarities of phrase. From
another imputation of Lord Hailes, that Ramsay,
in compiling his glossary, “ does not seem to have
“ consulted Ruddiman’s glossary to Douglas’s
“ Virgil,” I think our editor may be defended,
by shewing, that his lordship spoke, without autho-
rity, without comparing the glossaries of Ramsay
with the glossary of Ruddiman.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that the first
poem in Watson’s Choice Collection was Christ’s
Kirk

Kirk on the Green, which he attributed to King James V. ; and the first in the Evergreen of Ramsay was Chryfts Kirk on the Grene, which he attributed to King James I. : the second in Ramsay's Evergreen is The Thistle and the Rose of Dumbar ; the first in lord Hailes's Collection is The Thistle and the Rose, which was written in 1503.

If we compare the two versions, we shall be able to judge how far Ramsay departed from his duty, as an editor, to maintain his character, as a poet.

RAMSAY.

Quhen Merch with variand winds was overpast,
And sweet Apryle had with his silver showers
Tane leif of Nature with an orient blast,
And lusty May, that mudder is of flowrs,
Had maid the birds begin the tymous hours ;
Amang the tendir odours reid and quhyt,
Quhois harmony to heir was grit delyt.

LORD HAILES.

Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past,
And Appryll had with hir silver shouris
Tane leif at Nature with ane orient blast,
And lusty May, that muddir is of flouris,
Had maid the birdis to begyn thair houris
Amang the tendir odouris reid and quhyt,
Quhois harmony to heir it wes delyt.

Such are the variations of Ramfay from the standard of the original manuscript. He not only varied, but he also added : to Dumbar's Lament for the Deth of the Makkaris, our editor superinduced three stanzas, in the form of a prophecy, by the original author, wherein he introduced the editor, as " a lad frae Hether-muirs :"

XXV.

Suthe I forsie, if spaecraft had,
Frae Hether-muirs fall ryse a lad,
Aftir two centries pas, fall he
Revive our fame and memorie :

XXVI.

Then fall we flourish Evirgrene ;
All thanks to careful Bannatyne,
And to the patron * kind and frie
Quha lends the lad baith them and me.

XXVII.

Far fall we fare baith east and west,
Owre ilka clime by Scots posselt :
Then sen our warks fall never die,
Timor mortis non turbat me.

I strongly

* Mr. William Carmichael, brother to the earl of Hyndeford, who lent " he lad" [Allan Ramfay] that curious collection of MSS. which had been formed by Mr. George Bannatyne in 1568, whence those poems were printed.

I strongly suspect, that Ramsay wittingly inserted in his *Evirgrene* several poems, which were written by the ingenious subsequent to the year 1600, and even to the year 1700. In the first volume, is printed *The Vision*, which, although it is said to have been “ compylit in Latin anno 1300, and “ translatit in 1524,” is obviously modern, more modern than the union, and more recent than the accession of George I. : the versification indeed is ancient, and is written in imitation of what King James calls the tumbling verse, according to the royal revlis and cavtelis, “ to be literal [alliterative] so far as may be*.” Thus *The Vision* abounds in alliterations :

Bedoun

* It is a curious fact, in the history of Scottish poetry, that Scotland enjoyed the benefit of an *Art of Poetrie*, before England possessed a similar advantage, with all the efforts of Elizabeth's reign. Webb published his work in 1586, and Puttenham his *Art of Poetry* in 1589 : but King James, who was born in 1566, published in 1585, when he was only nineteen, his “ *Schort Treatise*, containing some revlis and cavtelis to be “ observit and escheivit in Scottis Poetrie ” The same writer, who treats “ maist reverend Virgil of Latine poetis prince,” as a blunderbuss, speaks of King James's *Schort Treatise*, as at once curious, though stupid. [*Ancient Scottish Poems* 1786, p. 119.]

Bedoun the bents of Banquo brae
Milane I wandert waif and wae,
 Mufand our main mischance ;
How be thae [those] faes we ar undone,
That staw the sacred stane frae Scone,
 And leids us sic a daunce.
Quhile Ingland's Edert taks our tours,
 And Scotland ferst obeys,
Rude ruffians ranfakk ryal bours,
 And Baliol homage pays :
 Throch feidom our freedom
 Is blotted with this skore,
What Romans' or no man's
 Pith culd eir do befoir.

Yet, the sentiments, and the style, are modern, and even the orthography is recent, although it is affectedly old : nor, did *The Vision* appear, in any publication, or manuscript, before it came forth in *The Evergreen*, with appropriate signatures, AR. Scot, but not A. Scot, as it is printed in the *Ancient Scots Poets* : neither was there any poet in Scotland of the name of AR. Scot, nor Archibald Scot ; though there had been indeed an Alexander Scott, during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots *. From the epoch of the publication of *The Vision*, Ramsay has been in possession of what
the

* See his poetry in the *Ancient Scots Poems*, 1768, p. 191. 211.

the tradition of his family has always said was originally his own. The Vision is declared to be "a capital poem," by the same editor, who treats Ramsay, as a writer, "shewing no spark of "genius *."

In

* Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, p. 127. 132. From the revival, in the present reign, of our taste, for the publication, and the study of our national poetry, during other times, ingenious men cast their eyes upon The Vision, as an object of inquiry, both as to its merit, and antiquity. The late Lord Hailes, and the present Dr. Beattie, conjectured, that it was modern, or was produced perhaps as late as the year 1715, as an incitement to the jacobitical spirit which then flamed out into action. Their conjectures are so far true, that The Vision was undoubtedly written "sen this disgraceful paction," since the union; and subsequent to the epoch, "when sum fule "Scotis lykd to drudge to princes no their awin:" it was jacobitish, in its tendency, in that age. The Vision has never been discovered, by diligent research, in any ancient collection, either in print, or MS. It ought to be admitted as a principle, in literary questions, that he who first publishes any productions must be deemed the writer of them, if he do not shew clearly who did write them. And it was certainly first published by Ramsay in 1724, under the disguise of age, and under a signature, which referred to a poet of a prior epoch, and yet contained his own initials, in this form, AR. Scot. Ramsay was in the habit of publishing such poems under similar disguises, for the similar purpose of concealing his principles, and his practices: the

In *The Evergrene* was also first printed *The Eagle and Robin Redbreist*, with the same signature of AR. Scot; and it was re-published in
The

the *Tale of Three Bonnets* was thus published, without the name of the printer or bookseller; but was advertised to be sold at Ramfay's shop, "among his other pieces." No one ever doubted, whether this tale were of Ramfay's composition. Neither did the familiars, and the family, of our poet ever doubt whether *The Vision*, and *The Eagle and Robin Redbreist*, were as certainly of his writing. Janet, the poet's daughter, told the late William Tytler, "that her father was the author of "both: the Roman letters," said she, "plainly point out the "name and surname of the author, with the addition of his "country, which he was always proud to acknowledge."—[*Transf. of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 397.] The same lady repeated the same information to Alexander Fraser Tytler, advocate, and professor of history in Edinburgh, more recently: "that she knew they were her "father's composition; that he always acknowledged them to "his intimate friends; but did not chuse to avow them, for "prudential reasons."—[Mr. Tytler's letter to me, dated the 21st of March 1794.] As to the internal evidence; the whole strain of *The Vision* is that of Ramfay: the fiction is old, but the sentiments are new; it has all the inequalities, and unprecision, and politics, of Ramfay, with his mythological personages, Boreas and Somnes, and Mars and Bacchus. The author, indeed, has many flights of true poetry; but the strength of his pinion does not long sustain him on the wing: he soon descends from his elevation to the level of colloquial vulgarisms:—"and leids us sic a dance;"—"round lyk a wedder-cock;"—"about poor lickmadowps." It has been suggested to me by
an

The Union, as the production of Archibald Scott, and among the Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, as “an elegant fable” by Sir John Bruce. Yet, this is merely, one of Ramsay’s usual fables, in which he introduced himself, as a poet, discountenanced by royal neglect, under the fiction of the Robin, who—

Resolvit again nae mair to sing,
 Quhair princelie bountie is supprest,
 By sic with quhome they ar opprest*.

In

an ingenious friend, that explaining, in his glossary, the word “feidom” to mean “fatality,” he does not seem to understand the phraseology of his own poem. It is however a fact, that in Scotland, even to this day, “feidom” does signify “fatality,” as Ramsay has explained it, and is, even now, in daily use: it is derived, and logically, from “fey,” fatal, unhappy, unfortunate—[Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl. Virgil in vo.]; as from “wise,” we form wisdom; and from “king,” kingdom. It is apparent, then, that Ramsay understood perfectly the common word feidom, as he properly applied it in the first stanza of The Vision. Upon the whole, it seems to me, that the evidence, for the affirmative proposition, that our poet did write The Vision, and The Eagle and Robin Redbreast, is decisive; and that the objections, in support of the negative proposition, are founded in mere suspicion, and surmise. Such are the reasons, which are submitted, for inserting both those poems, in this edition of Ramsay’s Poetry; as being at once the products of his genius, and specimens of his performances.

* In the Life of Johnson, vol. i. p. 93. Boswell says, what surely must have arisen from some mistake, that Guthrie informed

In *The Evergrene*, was published, in the last place, *Hardyknute*, a fragment. The inquiry, and the acuteness, of recent times, have discovered this fragment to be, also, a modern composition. It was first printed at Edinburgh, in 1719, in a separate folio; it was adopted into *The Evergreen*, in 1724; and it was republished by Doddsley, in 1740*. But, the author of this imposing imitation of ancient poetry has not hitherto been distinctly ascertained. A writer of discernment, and elegance, has justly remarked, “that some of the
“ finest lyric compositions of Scotland have been
“ produced

formed him, he was the author of “the beautiful little piece, “*The Eagle and Robin Redbreast*, in the collection of poems, “intituled *The Union*.” Neither Boswell, nor Guthrie, seem to have adverted, that this “beautiful poem” was first published in *The Evergreen*, by the original author of it, when Guthrie must have been a very young man: for he died on the 9th of March 1770.—[*Gent. Mag.* 143.]

* *Hardyknute* was then republished in 4to. with an appropriate preface, and notes. Upon inquiring of Mr. Doddsley, about the editor of the edition, 1740, he answered, with his usual liberality, “that we received the poem of *Hardyknute* “from a Scots gentleman of the name of Moncrief, but can “give no further account of him; except that about that time “he was tutor to some nobleman’s son at Eton.” Thus far Mr. Doddsley. John Moncrief, a Scotsman, tutor to a young gentleman at Eton, died about 1767, having produced a tragedy, intitled, *Appius*, 8vo. 1755.—[*Biog. Dram.* 323.—]

“ produced by the fair sex *.” It is to a lady, that the world is indebted for *Hardyknute*; although it was not to Mrs. Halkyt, nor to Mrs. Wardlaw: but it was to a lady of a knightly family, as Wood, or Hearne, would have written. The accomplished authorefs of *Hardyknute* was Lady Wardlaw of Pitrevie, in Fife, who was born in 1677, was married to Sir Henry Wardlaw, in 1696, and died, in 1726, or 1727 †; and was
buried

* *Scotish Songs*, 1794, p. 77.

† Sir Charles Hacket, Bart. of Pitferran, by Janet, the daughter of Sir Patrick Murray, Bart. of Dreddon, had one son, who died unmarried in 1705, and seven daughters. Elizabeth, their second daughter, was baptized on the 15th of April 1677; was married, on the 13th of June 1696, to Sir Henry Wardlaw, Bart: this is the authorefs of *Hardyknute*. Sir Charles Hacket's sixth daughter Charlotte married Sir John Hope Bruce of Kinross.—[*Dougl. Bar.* p. 283—286.] Sir John Bruce, of consequence, married the sister of Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw. This observation shews the connection between Sir John, and Lady Wardlaw. Sir John, when applied to by Lord Binning, with regard to *Hardyknute*, sent him a copy of that, which he had found in a vault at Dumfermline, in “ performance of his promise.” From these dark expressions, it is inferred, that Sir John was the author, rather than the finder of it.—[*Anc. Scot. Poems*, 1786, p. 127. *Percy's Ancient Poems*, vol. iii. p. 3.] There is not the least evidence, that Sir John Bruce ever wrote any poetry. It is apparent, that though Sir John may have told the truth, that
he

buried in the family vault, within the church of Dumfermline. The minute inquiries, which I have made,

he did not tell the whole truth ; that he knew, but did not choose to tell, who was the author ; that having given a promise, he thought himself obliged to say something ; but, he in the meantime consulted his wife's sister, who was the authoress ; and who yet did not think fit to allow him to speak out. On the other hand ; " the late Mr. Hepburn of Keith often declared, he was in the house with Lady Wardlaw, when " she wrote *Hardyknute*."—[Sir Charles Hacket's letter, dated the 2d November 1794, to Dr. Stenhouse of Dumfermline.] Miss Elizabeth Menzies, the daughter of James Menzies, Esq. of Woodend, in Perthshire, by Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Henry Wardlaw, wrote to Sir Charles Hacket, that her mother, who was sister-in-law to Lady Wardlaw, told her, that Lady Wardlaw was the real authoress of *Hardyknute* ; that Mary, the wife of Charles Wedderburn, Esq. of Gosford, told Miss Menzies, that her mother, Lady Wardlaw, wrote *Hardyknute* : both Sir Charles Hacket, and Miss Elizabeth Menzies, concur in saying, that Lady Wardlaw was a woman of elegant accomplishments, who wrote other poems, and practised drawing, and cutting paper with her scissors ; and who had much wit, and humour, with great sweetness of temper.—[Sir Charles Hacket's MS. Account of the Wardlaw Family.] The second edition of *Percy's Reliques*, 1767, vol. ii. p. 94. speaks of the virtual acknowledgement of the authoress, by the name of Mrs. Wardlaw : yet, in the same book, ed. 1794, vol. iii. p. 3. the editor relinquished his before-mentioned approximation to the truth, by adopting, from the said *Ancient Scots Poems*, the story of Sir John Bruce, which contains, at least, a false conclusion, from dubious premises.

made, on this curious subject, have perfectly satisfied me, that Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw was the authoress of Hardyknute.

It was intended by Ramsay, if his knowledge had been equal to his inclination, to give an account of the authors, who wrote the poems, which were published in *The Evergreen*: but, he delayed his laudable design till the publication of the third, or fourth, volume, which, however, was never given, though such a purpose was thus announced. Considering into whose hands such undertakings were to fall, it is not much to be regretted, that Ramsay never executed what he was unfit to perform. There seems never to have been but a second edition of *The Evergreen*, which was printed, at Edinburgh, for Alexander Donaldson, in 1761, without any amendment, or addition.

Ramsay undertook, in the mean time, a task, which was more congenial to his talents. Our poet had plainly a strong propensity to pastoral poetry: he wrote a pastoral, intitled *Richy and Sandy*, on the death of Addison; he wrote a pastoral, on the death of Prior; he wrote a pastoral ode, on the marriage of the Earl of Weemys; he wrote a pastoral masque, on the nuptials of the Duke of Hamilton, in 1723. And he published, in his 4to of
1721,

1721, *Patie and Roger*, a pastoral, inscribed to Josiah Burchet, one of his first patrons. This was followed, in 1723, by *Jenny and Meggy*, a pastoral, being "a sequel to *Patie and Roger*." Nothing now remained for Ramsay, but to adopt the intimations, which he received from his friends, and to throw his two pastorals into a more dramatical form, with appropriate songs.

This project he happily executed, in 1725, by the publication of his *Gentle Shepherd*, which is one of the finest pastoral comedies in any language; and which could have been, only, produced by art, co-operating with genius, in a propitious moment for shepherdish poetry. The name, he probably adopted from the gentle shepherd in the twelfth æglogue of Spenser. This pastoral comedy, as Ramsay called his Doric drama, the poet dedicated, in plain prose, to Susannah, the Countess of Eglinton, in June 1725. There was, at the same time, a poetical dedication of more elaborate praise, by Hamilton of Bangour, an amiable man, and accomplished poet, who finished his short career, at Lyons, in 1754, at the age of fifty. This is the same dignified lady, to whom, at the age of 85, Johnson, and Boswell, offered their homage; whose powers of pleasing continued so resplendent, as to charm the fastidious sage into a declaration
that,

that, in visiting such a woman, he had spent his day well. This celebrated patroness of poets was the accomplished daughter of the noble house of Kennedy, who having married, in 1708, Alexander the Earl of Eglinton, by whom she had three sons, two of whom succeeded to the earldom, and seven daughters, who married into honourable families, died on the 18th of March 1780, at the patriarchal age of ninety-one *.

The second edition of this pastoral comedy was printed by Ruddiman, in 1726, for the author, who still resided at his shop, as a bookseller, opposite the Cross at Edinburgh †. The tenth edition of it was reprinted by the elegant types of R. and A. Foulis, at Glasgow, in 1750. It has since passed through many editions, some of them with greater, and some with less elegance, and accuracy. What has thus pleased many, and pleased long, it would be useless to praise, and idle to censure : yet, has hypercriticism, with as much dulness, as absurdity,

* Scots Mag. p. 167.

† In the parish register, which records the baptism of his children, Ramsay is called a piriwige-maker, in 1713 ; a weegmaker, in 1714, 1715, and 1716 ; but on the 10th of August 1725, he is called a bookseller.

absurdity, declared *The Gentle Shepherd* “to be
“ more barbarous, and stupid, than *The Beggars’*
“ *Opera* * !” When this captivating drama was
first acted, cannot be easily ascertained ; but, it
certainly was represented after *The Orphan*, in
January 1729, when the author of it contributed
an epilogue.

It has been the fate of Ramsay, as it was, indeed,
of Terence, to have his fame lessened by detraction,
which has attributed to others his dramatic powers :
Scipio, and Lælius, are said to have had a great
share in the composition of Terence’s plays : Sir
John Clerk, and Sir William Bennet, are alleged,
on less authority, to have assisted Ramsay, in his
Gentle Shepherd : but, it has been well observed
by the late Lord Hailes, “ that they who attempt
“ to depreciate his fame, by insinuating, that his
“ friends and patrons composed the works, which
“ pass under his name, ought first to prove, that
“ his friends, and patrons, were capable of com-
“ posing *The Gentle Shepherd* †.”

Ramsay shewed, also, his dramatical propensities,
by writing prologues, and epilogues, for occasional
dramas :

* *Ancient Scot. Poems*, 1786, p. 133.

† *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1768, p. 8.

dramas: he began this congenial practice in 1719, and concluded it in 1729. Some of these may vie with the finest, in the English language, for propriety of satire, and happiness of point; delicacy of wit, and neatness of phrase: this commendation is amply justified by his prologue, which was spoken by one of the gentlemen, who acted at Edinburgh *The Orphan*, and *The Cheats of Scapin*, for their diversion, on the last night of the year 1719.

The celebrity of Ramsay was attended, however, like the other felicities of life, with circumstances of mortification. He had to struggle with contemporary contenders for poetic fame. There were published, about that time, some stanzas, intitled, “A Block for Allan Ramsay’s Wigs, or, “the famous Poet fallen in a trance.” There were also printed some verses, called, “Allan “Ramsay metamorphosed to a Heatherbloter “Poet; in a pastoral, between *Ægon* and *Me- “libiæ*.” Ramsay was thus induced to give his “Reasons for not answering the Hackney Scrib- “blers:”

These to my blyth indulgent friends;
Dull foes nought at my hands deserve.
To pump an answer ’s a’ their ends;
But, not a line, if they should starve.

By the attacks of such scribblers, Ramsay seems not to have been much moved. He continued to please his numerous readers, by publishing, successively, popular poems: he printed his *Fables and Tales*, in 1722; his *Tale of Three Bonnets*, in the same year; *The Fair Assembly*, in 1723; his poem *On Health*, which he addressed to the celebrated Earl of Stair: and he was thus enabled to publish, in 1728, a second volume of his poems, in quarto; including *The Gentle Shepherd*, and his *Masque on the nuptials of the Duke of Hamilton*, which brings to our recollection the similar madrigals of Ben Jonson. Of this quarto, an octavo edition was published, in 1729: both the volumes were re-published, at London, for the bookfellers, during the year 1731. The poetry of Ramsay met with a flattering welcome, not only in Scotland, and in England, but also in the colonies, and in Ireland: and there was published, at Dublin, an edition of his poems in 1733. Of this universality of reception, our bard delighted to sing, in grateful strains, both as a poet, and a bookfeller.

In 1730, Ramsay published “A Collection of thirty Fables.” In this species of poetry, he appears to have greatly indulged; because what he easily found, he readily delivered: yet, about this
time,

time, he seems to have ceased writing for the public, at the age of forty-five ; having diligently tried, during twenty years, to please his countrymen, and benefit himself. In his letter to Smibert, he says, in 1736, “ these six or seven years past I have “ not written a line of poetry : I e’en gave over in “ good time, before the coolness of fancy, that attends advanced years, should make me risk the “ reputation I had acquired *.” Ramsay had now obtained, by his poetry, all the fame, which was to be had : and he was incited, by his love of profit, to busy himself, not in writing, but in selling, and circulating books. In 1726, he removed from his original dwelling, at the Mercury, opposite the Cross-well, to a house, which had been the London Coffee-house, in the east end of the Luckenbooths. With this change of situation, he altered his sign ; and instead of the original Mercury, he now adopted the heads of two poets, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Ben Jonson : here he sold, and lent, books, till a late period of his life : here the wits of Edinburgh used to meet for amusement, and for information. From this commodious

* This curious letter, which is dated the 10th of May 1736, was first published in the *Gent. Mag.* September 1784, p. 672 ; and was thence copied into other miscellanies.

commodious situation, Gay, a congenial poet, was wont to look out upon the Exchange of Edinburgh, in order to know persons, and to ascertain characters *.

It was in this society, and in that station, that Ramsay's passion for the drama returned on him. In 1736, at the age of fifty, he undertook to build "a playhouse new, at vast expence:" this house, he built in Carrubber's Close. He boasts of having

" — kept our troop, by pith of reason,
" Frae bawdy, atheism, and treason."

In vain did Ramsay, and his troop, "only preach, " frae moral fable, the best instruction they were "able." The act, for licensing the stage, which was passed in 1737, crushed the poet's hopes of conveying "the best instruction," and calmed the scrupulosity

* The late William Tytler, Esq. recollected Gay, in the shop, desiring Ramsay "to explain to him many of the Scottish expressions of *The Gentle Shepherd*, which Gay said he "would communicate to Pope, who was a great admirer of "that pastoral" Gay used to accompany the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry to Scotland. Gay was described by Mr. Tytler, as "a little pleasant-looking man, with a tye-wig."

scrupulosity of those, who feared, that amusement, and religion, could not exist together.

At Edinburgh, the magistrate had not yet considered, like the ministers of Elizabeth, that, in well-regulated society, public amusements may produce advantages, without any other evils, than can be easily corrected. The rulers of Edinburgh, thinking very differently from our dramatist, as to the mode, and the matter, of the instruction, which was thus given to the citizens, who were entrusted to their care, shut up his playhouse; leaving the undertaker without relief, for what the law considered as a damage, without an injury *. Our dramatist had, on this occasion, other mortifications to suffer: there was soon published a poetical pamphlet, containing “ The Flight of Religious Piety
“ from

* There is happily preserved in the Gentleman's Mag. 1737, p. 507, a poetical Address from Ramsay to the Honourable Duncan Forbes, the Lord President of the Session, and the other Judges. This illustrious president was appointed to that high trust, on the 21st of June 1737, a fact, which would ascertain the dates of this whole transaction, if the licensing act (10 Geo. II. ch. 28.) were not mentioned. The address of Ramsay, which is at once a specimen of his poetry, and an history of his playhouse, is subjoined:

“ from Scotland, upon the account of Ram-
 “ fay’s lewd books, and the hell-bred playhouse
 “ comedians,

To the Honourable Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord
 Prefident of the Session, and all our other Judges,
 who are careful of the honour of the government,
 and the property of the subject :

THE ADDRESS OF ALLAN RAMSAY

Humbly means and shaws,

To you, my Lords, whase elevation
 Makes you the wardens of the nation,
 While you with equal justice stand,
 With Lawtie’s balance in your hand ;
 To you, whase penetrating skill
 Can eithly redd the good frae ill,
 And ken them well whase fair behaviour
 Deserve reward and royal favour,
 As like you do, these stonkerd fellows,
 Wha merit naithing but the gallows :
 To you, with humble bow, your bard,
 Whase greatest brag is your regard,
 Begs leave to lay his case before ye,
 And for an outgate to implore ye.

Last year, my Lords, nae farrer gane,
 A coftly wark was undertane
 By me, wha had not the least dread
 An act wad knock it on the head :
 A playhouse new, at vast expence,
 To be a large, yet bein defence,
 In winter nights, ’gainst wind and weet,
 To ward frae cauld the lasses sweet,
 While they with bonny smiles attended,
 To have their little failures mended ;

Where

“ comedians, who debauch all the faculties of
 “ the soul of our rising generation.”—There
 also appeared, “ A Looking-glass for Allan
 “ Ramfay :” — “ The dying words of Allan
 “ Ramfay.”

Where satire, striving still to free them,
 Hads out his glass to let them see them.
 Here, under rules of right decorum,
 By placing consequence before 'em,
 I kept our troop, by pith of reason,
 Frae bawdy, atheism, and treason ;
 And only preach'd, frae moral fable,
 The best instruction they were able ;
 While they by doctrine linsy-woolfsy,
 Set aff the utile with dulce.

And shall the man to whom this task falls,
 Suffer amang confounded rascals,
 That, like vile adders, dart their stings,
 And fear nae God, nor honour kings ?
 Shall I, Wha for a tract of years
 Have sung to commons and to peers,
 And got the general approbation
 Of all within the British nation,
 At last be twin'd of all my hopes
 By them who wont to be my props ?
 Be made a loser, and engage
 With troubles in declining age ;
 While wights, to whom my credit stands
 For fums, make four and throwin demands ?

Shall London have its houses twa,
 And we be doom'd to 've nane awa ?
 Is our metrop'lis, anes the place,
 Where long since dwelt the royal race
 Of Fergus, this gate dwindled down
 T' a level with ilk clachan town,
 While thus she suffers the subversion
 Of her maist rational diversion ?

“ Ramfay.” The lampooners left intimations of what must have given considerable consolation to our adventurous dramatist : that “ he had
“ acquired

When ice and snaw o'erleads the isle,
Wha now will think it worth their while
To leave their gowsty country bowers,
For the anes blythsome Edinburgh's towers,
Where there 's no glee to give delight,
And ward frae spleen the langsome night ?
For which they 'll now have nae relief,
But sonk at hame, and cleck mischief.

Is there ought better than the stage
To mend the follies of the age,
If manag'd as it ought to be,
Frae ilka vice and blaidry free ?
Which may be done with perfect ease,
And nought be heard that shall displease,
Or give the least offence or pain,
If we can hae 't restor'd again.
Wherefore, my Lords, I humbly pray
Our lads may be allow'd to play,
At least till new-house debts be paid off,
The cause that I'm the maist afraid of ;
Which laide lyes on my single back,
And I man pay it ilka plack.

Now, it 's but just the legislature
Shou'd either say that I 'm a fauter,
Or thole me to employ my bigging,
Or of the burthen ease my rigging,
By ordering, frae the public fund,
A sum to pay for what I'm bound ;
Syne, for amends for what I've lost,
Edge me into some canny post,
With the good liking of our king,
And your petitioner shall—sing.

“ acquired wealth ;” that “ he posselt a fine house ;” that “ he had raised his kin to high degree :” all those advantages, we may easily suppose, were merely comparative. This puritanical poet, like other satirists, did not advert, that his topics of censure did more honour than hurt to Ramsay, who was only low by accident, and had, by fair means, raised himself to competence, and his family to distinction.

The obscure history of the public amusements of Scotland still requires much illustration. Before the accession of King James, who merits commendation for protecting the drama, histrionic representations stood upon the same principle in Scotland, as in England, of allowing the use, yet correcting the abuse, of such exhibitions. A century of fanaticism ensued, with her agitations, and her bloodshed, which obstructed improvement, by depressing genius, and perverting effort. Merri-ment began to move on light fantastic toe, during the reign of Charles II. But, the union of the two kingdoms forms the epoch of melioration, though not so much from any positive provision, as by consequential results. When fanaticism was repressed, the desire of theatrical amusements began soon to revive. As early as the summer of 1715, an year of agitation, a regular company of comedians acted plays,

plays, at the Tennis-court, in Holyrood-house. In the subsequent winter, the scene was shifted from the Tennis-court to “the old Magazine-house at “the back of the foot of the Canongate.” On this occasion, the lovers of the drama were informed, “that several parts would be performed “by some new actors just arrived from Eng- “land*.” From this epoch, Edinburgh was frequently exhilarated by scenic representations, which were, sometimes, diversified “by entertainments “of singing and dancing, by gentlemen for their “diversion.” On the last night of the year 1719, Ramsay supplied a prologue, which is remarkable, at once, for elegant raillery, and healthful merriment. He again furnished a prologue, in 1726, when Anthony Alton entertained the citizens of Edinburgh with theatrical amusements. Ten years afterwards, our dramatist undertook, in an unlucky hour for his own interest, to be the proprietor of a playhouse, which, as we have seen, was shut up by the magistrate. In 1739, the parliament was moved for legal authority to establish a playhouse
at

* All those facts are mentioned, on the authority of the Scots Courant of the 5th, 10th, and 15th of August, and of the 16th of December 1715 : and those facts disprove what is said by Arnot [Hist. Edin. p. 366.] ; and by Jackson, after him. [Hist. of the Scots Stage, p. 22.]

at Edinburgh, which was refused; because the spirit of certain classes of the people was not yet sufficiently prepared to endure salutary mirth. They were protected in the enjoyment of their gloom, by the licencing act, which was ere long circumvented. It was in 1741, that Thomas Este established a theatre in the Taylors' Hall, under the pretence of giving a concert of music *. The passions of the people, which were sharpened by opposition, supported this evasion of law. In 1746, a theatre was built in the Canongate, where plays were acted, at stated times, under a similar evasion. Thus, Ramsay had the satisfaction to see, at the age of sixty, dramatical entertainments enjoyed by the citizens, whose theatrical wishes he had rekindled, and inflamed.

Our poet, as he had now ceased to write, for the public, was only attentive to his shop, and his family. He sent his son to Rome, in 1736, in order to acquire, at that illustrious seat of knowledge, the art of painting, by which he rose to eminence.

His

* The Caledonian Mercury of the 12th February 1745, announced the death of Thomas Este, "one of the managers of
" the concert in the Taylors' Hall, who has, for these four
" years past, most agreeably entertained the town with his
" excellent performances on the stage."

His wife, who died in 1743, seems to have passed to her grave, without an elegy ; because the loss was too afflicting for loquacity to deplore *. She left him three daughters, who, as they were advanced to womanhood, in some measure supplied her society, and superintendence. He spent much of his time, during his latter years, with Sir John Clerk of Pennycuik and Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield, who courted his company ; because they were delighted by his facetiousness. He probably relinquished his shop, in 1755. And, for some years, he lived in a fantastical house of an octagon form, which he had built, on the north side of the Castle-hill ; and which he thought a paragon : this house, he was induced, by his vanity, to shew to the late Lord Elibank, who had both acuteness, and wit ; telling his lordship, at the same time, that the cits say, it resembles a goose-pye ; to which my lord readily replied : “ Indeed, Allan, “ now that I see you in it, I think the term is very “ properly applied.”

We may learn some important circumstances, with regard to our poet’s mature years, and advanced

* Christian Ross, spouse to Allan Ramfay merchant, was buried in the cemetery of the Grayfriars, on the 28th of March 1743.—[Rec. of Mortality.]

vanced fortune, from an unpublished copy of verses, which he wrote to James Clerk, Esq. of Pennycuik, on the 9th of May 1755 :

Born to not e'en ae inch of ground,
I keep my conscience white and sound ;
And tho' I ne'er was a rich keeper,
To make that up, I live the cheaper ;
By that ae knack, I 've made a shift
To drive ambitious cares adrift :
And now in years and sense grown auld,
In ease I like my limbs to fauld.
Debts I abhor, and plan to be
Frae shackling trade and danger free ;
That I may, loose frae care and strife,
With calmness view the edge of life,
And, when a full ripe age shall crave,
Slide easily into my grave ;
Now, seventy years are o'er my head,
And thirty mae may lay me dead *.

When

* MS. copy from Sir James Clerk. These verses disprove an unauthorized story, which was first told in Lord Gardenston's Miscellanies, a disgraceful compilation of no authority : It was compiled by one Callender, who was obliged to flee from the justice of his country. It is therein invidiously said, " that Ramsay died a bankrupt ; and that his son paid his debts." We have seen, that the poet, as a discreet man, " abhorred " debts : " his son may have been his executor, and may have paid such petty debts, as the most prudent housekeeper must

When Ramsay talked thus familiarly of life and death, he was much afflicted with the scurvy in his gums; which had deprived him not only of his teeth, but even of a part of the jaw-bone. While he jocosely counted upon thirty years to be added to seventy, he much miscalculated the chances of life; for, he died at Edinburgh, on the 7th of January 1758, when he had passed the age of seventy-two, and was buried in the churchyard of the Greyfriars*.

Christian

must owe, when he pays the debt which all must pay. Some houses in the Luckenbooths are, to this day, possessed by our poet's daughter, from his bequest. He died in easy circumstances, as I have been assured by a very intelligent friend, at Edinburgh, who knew the poet's pecuniary affairs.

* He was buried on the 9th of January 1758.—[Record of Mortality.] He is therein called ‘Allan Ramsay, poet, who “died of old age. He was well known for his Gentle Shepherd, and many other poetical pieces in the Scotch dialect, which he wrote and collected.”—[Scots Mag. vol. xix. p. 670.] The Gentleman's Magazine, 1758, p. 46. which also records his death, calls Ramsay, with less fastidiousness, “the celebrated poet.” He, who had panegyricized so many poets, now departed with scarcely any poetical notice. Sir John Clerk, one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland, who admired his genius, and knew his worth, erected, at his family seat of Pennycuik, an obelisk to the memory of Ramsay.

At

Christian Rofs, the wife of Allan Ramsay,
brought him many children *. Two daughters,
Christian,

At Woodhouselee, near the scene of the Gentle Shepherd,
Alexander Frazer Tytler, Esq. has dedicated a rustic temple

“ ALLAN RAMSAY *et* GENIO LOCI.

“ Here midst those scenes that taught thy Doric Muse
“ Her sweetest song ; the hills, the woods, and stream,
“ Where beauteous Peggy stray'd, list'ning the while
“ Her Gentle Shepherd's tender tale of love ;
“ Scenes, which thy pencil, true to Nature, gave
“ To live for ever ; sacred be this shrine ;
“ And unprofan'd, by ruder hands, the stone,
“ That owes its honours to thy deathless name.”

* At Edinburgh the sixth day of October 1713.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, periwig-maker, and Christian Rofs, his spouse, New Kirk parish, a son, Allan. Witnesses, John Symer, William Mitchell, and Robert Mein, merchants, burgeses ; and William Baxter.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, burges, and Christian Rofs his spouse, North East (College Kirk) parish, a daughter named Sufanna. Witnesses, John Symers, merchant, and John Morison, merchant. The child was born on the first instant. 3d October 1714.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, and Christian Rofs his spouse, North East parish, a son, Niell. Witnesses, Walter Boswell, fadler, and John Symer, merchant. 9th October 1715.

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, weegmaker, and Christian Rofs his spouse, North East parish, a son, Robert. Witnesses, John Symers, merchant, and Walter Boswell, fadler. The child was born on the 10th instant. 23d November 1716.

Christian, and Janet, and a son, Allan, survived him. This son, who appears to have received an excellent education, was born with a genius both for poetry, and painting. He studied the imitative art at London, and at Rome, which he practised as a profession; and having risen to distinction as a scholar, and a painter, he died on the 10th of August 1784, at Dover, on his return from France. Allan Ramsay, the painter, was twice married: first to Miss Bayne, the daughter of Mr. Professor Bayne of Edinburgh, and the sister of the late gallant Captain Bayne of the navy; by whom he had a daughter, who died under age: he married, for his second wife, the eldest daughter of Sir Alexander Lindsay of Evelick, Baronet, by Emilia, the daughter of the Viscount of Stormont, and niece to the great Earl of Mansfield; she was also the sister of

Registrate to Allan Ramsay, bookseller, and Christian Rofs his spouse, a daughter, named Agnes. Witnesses, James Norie, painter, and George Young, Chyrurgeon. Born the 9th instant. 10th August 1725.

[Extracted from the Register of Births and Baptisms for the City of Edinburgh, by John Murdoch, Dep. Seff. Clerk]

Christian Rofs brought Allan Ramsay three other Daughters, who were not recorded in the Register: one who was born in 1719, one in 1720, and one in 1724, who are mentioned, in his letter to Smibert, as fine girls; "no ae wally dragle among them all." Christian died, lately; Janet is still alive.

of the late Sir David Lindsay, and Sir John Lindsay : she died in 1782 ; leaving by Allan Ramsay, a daughter, who married the late General Sir Archibald Campbell, K. B. ; a daughter, who married Colonel Malcolm ; and a son, who is the male representative of our poet, Lieutenant-Colonel John Ramsay of the third regiment of foot guards.

Ramsay, the poet, left behind him so many intimations, with regard to his person, and his character, that the diligent biographer has more to compile, than to conjecture : of himself, his vanity delighted to speak :

Imprimis, then, for tallness, I
Am five foot and four inches high :
A black-a-vice dapper fellow,
Nor lean, nor overlaid with tallow.

As he advanced in years, his appearance, no doubt, changed. He is described, by those who remember him, as a squat man, with a big belly, and a smiling countenance, who wore a fair round wig, which was rather short. He described himself at a different period ; when his vanity was studious to tell,

—— I the best and fairest please ;
A little man that lo'es my ease ;
And never thole these passions lang,
That rudely mint to do me wrang.

With all his socialness, and conviviality, he never indulged to excess in the pleasures of the table :

I hate a drunkard, or a glutton ;
Yet, I 'm nae fae to wine and mutton.
Then, for the fabrick of my mind ;
'Tis mair to mirth than grief inclin'd ;
I rather choose to laugh at folly,
Than shew dislike by melancholy.

As to his religion, he honestly avowed his creed :

Neist, Anti-Toland, Blunt, and Whiston,
Know positively I 'm a Christian ;
Believing truths, and thinking free,
Wishing thrawn parties would agree.

With regard to his politics ; he confessed to Arbuckle :

Well then, I 'm neither whig, nor tory,
Nor credit give to purgatory.

But, there was another party, the Jacobites, for which Ramsay had a predilection, whatever neutrality he might affect. As a poet, he naturally loved freedom, and arrogated independence ; as all the poets are fond of courting the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty. Of the great propensities of his lengthened life, he declares :

I never

I never cou'd imagine 't vicious,
Of a fair fame to be ambitious,
Proud to be thought a comic poet,
And let a judge of numbers know it ;
I court occasion thus to shew it.

He avowed also in plain prose, “ that I have expressed my thoughts in my native dialect, which was not only inclination, but the desire of my best, and wisest friends ; and most reasonable ; since good imagery, just similes, and all manner of ingenious thoughts, in a well-laid design, is poetry : then, good poetry may be in any language.”

About his learning he is equally explicit, in making his acknowledgments : he declares, without blushing, that “ I understand Horace but faintly in the original ; and yet can feast on his beautiful thoughts dressed in British [English] : and perhaps it had been no worse for the great Lyric, if Doctor Bentley had understood the Latin tongue as little as I.” He is equally explicit as to his ignorance of the Greek : “ The Scoticisms, which perhaps may offend some over-nice ear, give new life, and grace, to the poetry ; and become their places as well, as the Doric dialect of Theocritus, which is so much admired by the best judges : when I mention

d 3

“ that

“ that tongue, I bewail my own little knowledge
“ of it *” Yet, Ramsay, like other half-learned men, was studious at times to shew his erudition. He cultivated the acquaintance of Ruddiman, who was always ready to spare to the needy, and helpless, a part of his own stores of classic lore. From this fountain of learning, Ramsay easily drew the Latin, and Greek mottos, which he frequently prefixed to his separate pamphlets; and which, as unsuitable to such poems, by such a bard, have been excluded from these volumes: scholars did not want such mottos; and the unlearned with such obstructions out of their way.

Our poet, whatever might be the humility of his pretensions, had his maligners, and competitors. I greatly suspect, that Alexander Pennecuik, citizen of Edinburgh, who was called “ that famous and “ learned poet,” wrote “ The Flight of Religious “ Piety from Scotland, upon account of Ramsay’s “ lewd books.” This Alexander Pennecuik must be distinguished from Dr. Alexander Pennecuik, a physician, in Tweedale, who published a topographical description of that pastoral district, in 1715, and who was also ambitious of public fame,

* The Pref. to the ed. 1721.



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fame *, as a poet, and topographer. The rival of Ramsay was a much younger person, who resided in Edinburgh, where he published “Streams from Helicon,” and other miscellanies, from time to time, while Ramsay rose into notice, notwithstanding his rivalry.

* The two Pennecuiks were confounded by the Editor of the Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786:—“Alexander Pennecuik,” says he, “wrote a few Scottish poems of no value, published “with his Account of Tweeddale. He is said to have given “Ramsay the Plot of the Gentle Shepherd.”—[Pref. 136.] The said Editor seems not to have known “the famous Pennecuik, whose undoubted rivalry disproves the unauthorized “assertion, that he gave Ramsay the plot of the Gentle Shepherd.” Alexander Pennecuik, the rival of Ramsay, was buried in the Greyfriars churchyard, on the 28th of November 1730.—[Record of Mortality.] He is called on the Register, “Alexander Pencook, merchant;” as Ramsay was also called by it, merchant, because he was a bookfeller.

POEMS ON SIMILAR SUBJECTS :

BY RAMSAY :

Elegy on John Cupar, Kirk-Treasurer's Man; 1714.

The last Speech of a wretched Miser.

On the Royal Company of Archers marching, &c. ; 4th August 1724.

The Nuptials, a Masque, on the Marriage of his Grace James Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, &c.

An Ode sacred to the Memory of Ann Duchefs of Hamilton.

Prologue spoken by Mr. Anthony Aston the first Night he acted in Winter 1726.

BY PENNECUIK :

Elegy on Robert Forbes, Kirk-Treasurer's Man.

The Picture of a Miser ; written of George Herriot's Anniverfary, 3d June 1728.

Panegyric on the noble Company of Bowmen, &c. 11th May 1726.

A Pastoral on the Nuptials of his Grace James Duke of Hamilton, &c. with the Lady Ann Cochran, Daughter of the Right Hon. John Earl of Dundonald ; solemnized 14th Feb. 1723.

The Heavenly Vision ; sacred to the Memory of Ann Duchefs of Hamilton.

Prologue to the Beggars' Opera, when first acted in the Tennis-court at Holyrood-house, 1728.

REMARKS
ON
THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS
OF
ALLAN RAMSAY.

As the writings of *Allan Ramsay* have now stood the test of the public judgment, during more than seventy years ; and, in the opinion of the best critics, he seems to bid fair to maintain his station among our poets, it may be no unpleasing, nor uninstruative employment, to examine the grounds, on which that judgment is founded ; to ascertain the rank, which he holds in the scale of merit ; and to state the reasons, that may be given, for assigning him that distinguished place among the original poets of his country, to which I conceive he is entitled.

The

The genius of Ramsay was original ; and the powers of his untutored mind were the gift of nature, freely exercising itself within the sphere of its own observation. Born in a wild country, and accustomed to the society of its rustic inhabitants, the poet's talents found their first exercise in observing the varied aspects of the mountains, rivers, and vallies ; and the no less varied, though simple manners, of the rude people, with whom he conversed. He viewed the former with the enthusiasm which, in early childhood, is the inseparable attendant of genius ; and on the latter he remarked, with that sagacity of discriminating observation, which instructed the future moralist, and gave the original intimations to the contemporary satirist. With this predisposition of mind, it is natural to imagine, that the education, which he certainly received, opened to him such sources of instruction as English literature could furnish ; and his kindred talents directed his reading chiefly to such of the *poets* as occasion threw in his way.

Inheriting that ardour of feeling, which is generally accompanied with strong sentiments of moral excellence, and keenly awake even to those slighter deviations from propriety, which constitute the foibles of human conduct, he learned, as it were from intuition, the glowing language, which is best fitted
for

for the scourge of vice ; as well as the biting ridicule, which is the most suitable corrective of gross impropriety, without deviating into personal lampoon.

A consciousness of his own talents induced *Ramsay* to aspire beyond the situation of a mere mechanic ; and the early notice, which his first poetical productions procured him, was a natural motive for the experiment of a more liberal profession, which connected him easily with those men of wit, who admired, and patronised him. As a bookseller, he had access to a more respectable class in society. We may discern, in the general tenor of his compositions, a respectful demeanour towards the great, and the rich, which, though it never descends to adulation or servility, and generally seeks for an apology in some better endowments than mere birth or fortune, is yet a sensible mark, that these circumstances had a strong influence on his mind.

As he extended the sphere of his acquaintance, we may presume, that his knowledge of men, and acquaintance with manners, were enlarged ; and, in his latter compositions, we may discern a sufficient intelligence of those general topics, which engaged the public attention. The habits of polite life, and
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the subjects of fashionable conversation, were become familiar, at this time, to the citizens of Edinburgh, from the periodical papers of *Addison*, and *Steele*; and the wits of *Balfour's* Coffee-house, *Forrester*, *Falconer*, *Bennet*, *Clerk*, *Hamilton* of Bangour, *Preston*, and *Crawfurd**, were a miniature of the society, which was to be met with at *Will's*, and *Button's*.

The political principles of *Ramsay* were those of an old Scotsman, proud of his country, delighted to call to mind its ancient honours, while it held the rank of a distinct kingdom, and attached to the succession of its ancient princes. Of similar sentiments, at that time, were many of the Scottish gentry. The chief friends of the poet were probably men, whose sentiments on those subjects agreed with his own; and the Easy Club, of which he was an original member, consisted of youths who were anti-unionists. Yet, among the patrons of *Ramsay*, were some men of rank, who were actuated by very different principles, and whose official situation would have made it improper

* To the three last of these we owe the words of some of the best of the Scottish songs, which are to be found in the collection published by *Ramsay*, called *The Tea-table Miscellany*.

improper for them, openly, to countenance a poet, whose opinions were obnoxious to the rulers of his country. Of this he was aware; and putting a just value on the friendship of those distinguished persons, he learnt to be cautious in the expression of any opinions, which might risk the forfeiture of their esteem: hence he is known to have suppressed some of his earlier productions, which had appeared only in manuscript; and others, which prudence forbade him to publish, were ushered into the world without his name, and even with false signatures. Among the former was a poem to the memory of the justly celebrated *Dr. Pitcairne*, which was printed by the Easy Club, but never published; and among the latter, is *The Vision*, which he printed in the *Ever-green*, with the signature of AR. SCOT *.

In Ramsay's *Vision*, the author, in order to aid the deception, has made use of a more antiquated phraseology, than that, which we find in his other Scottish poems: but, it evidently appears from this attempt,

* See *Observations on The Vision*, by William Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee, in the first volume of the Transactions of Scottish Antiquaries; where that poem, and The Eagle and Robin Redbreast, are proved to be both written by Allan Ramsay.

attempt, and from the two cantos, which he added to *King James the First's* ludicrous satire of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, that *Ramsay* was not much skilled in the ancient Scottish dialect. Indeed the Glossary, which he annexed to the two quarto volumes of his poems, wherein are many erroneous interpretations, is of itself sufficient proof of this assertion. In compiling the Glossary to his *Evergreen*, *Lord Hailes* has remarked, that he does not seem ever to have consulted the Glossary to *Douglas's Virgil*; “and yet they who have not consulted it, cannot acquire a competent knowledge of the ancient Scottish dialect, unless by infinite and ungrateful labour*.” A part of this labour

* I am convinced, however, from a comparison of many of *Ramsay's* interpretations, both in the Glossary to the *Evergreen*, printed in 1724, and in that, which is subjoined to his *Poems*, with the interpretations given by *Ruddiman* in the Glossary to *G. Douglas's Virgil*, that *Ramsay* had made frequent use of the latter for the explanation of the most antiquated words; though he does not seem to have studied it with that care, which his duty as an editor of ancient Scottish poetry certainly required. In proof of this, his obligations to *Ruddiman's* Glossary, the reader has only to compare, with the interpretations in that work, the following, given by *Ramsay* in the Glossary to his *Poems*: *Bodin, Brankan, Camfchough, Dern, Douks, Dynles, Elritch, Ettle, Freck, Goufly, Moup, Pawky, Witherbins*; and the following, in the Glossary to the *Evergreen*: *Crawdon, Galziart, Ithandly, Ourefret, Rufe, Schent, &c.*

hour undoubtedly may be ascribed to *Ramsay*, when he selected and transcribed, from the *Bannatyne manuscript*, those ancient poems, which chiefly compose the two volumes of his *Evergreen*: and hence it is probable, he derived the most of what he knew of the older dialect of his country. His own stock was nothing else than the oral language of the farmers of the *Lothians*, and the common talk of the citizens of Edinburgh, to which his ears were constantly accustomed. A Scotsman, in the age of Ramsay, generally *wrote* in English; that is, he imitated the style of the English writers; but when he *spoke*, he used the language of his country. The sole peculiarity of the style of Ramsay is, that he transferred the oral language to his writings. He could write, as some of his compositions evince, in a style, which may be properly termed English verse; but he wrote with more ease in the Scottish dialect, and he preferred it, as judging, not unreasonably, that it conferred a kind of Doric simplicity, which, when he wished to paint with fidelity the manners of his countrymen, and the peculiarities of the lower orders, was extremely suitable to such subjects.

From these considerations, one cannot but wonder at the observation, which is sometimes made even by Scotsmen of good taste, that the language
of

of *The Gentle Shepherd* disgusts from its vulgarity. It is true, that in the present day, the Scottish dialect is heard only in the mouths of the lowest of the populace, in whom it is generally associated with vulgarity of sentiment; but those critics should recollect, that it was the language of the Scottish people, which was to be imitated, and that too of the people upwards of a century ago, if we carry our mind back to the epoch of the scene.

If *Ramsay* had made the shepherds of the Lowlands of Scotland, in the middle of the seventeenth century, speak correct English, how preposterous would have been such a composition! But, with perfect propriety, he gave them the language, which belonged to them; and if the sentiments of the speakers be not reproachable with unnecessary vulgarity, we cannot with justice associate vulgarism with a dialect, which in itself is proper, and in its application is characteristic. After all, what is the language of *Ramsay*, but the common speech of Yorkshire during the last century*?

But, as associated ideas arise only where the connection is either in itself necessary, or the relation is
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* See "A Yorkshire Dialogue in its pure natural dialect;" printed at York, 1684.

so intimate, the two ideas are seldom found dis-united ; so of late years, that disunion has taken place in a twofold manner ; for the language, even of the common people of Scotland, is gradually refining, and coming nearer to the English standard ; and it has fortunately happened, that the Scottish dialect has lately been employed in compositions of transcendant merit, which have not only exhibited the finest strokes of the pathetic, but have attained even to a high pitch of the sublime. For the truth of this observation, we may appeal to *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, and *The Vision of Burns*. In these, the language, so far from conveying the idea of vulgarity, appears most eminently suited to the sentiment, which seems to derive, from its simplicity, additional tendernefs, and superior elevation *.

The

* As the Scottish language has, to an Englishman, the air of an antiquated tongue, it will be relished as such in grave compositions, on the principle assigned by Quintilian : *Propriis verbis dignitatem dat antiquitas ; namque et sanctiorem et magis admirabilem reddunt orationem, quibus non quilibet fuerit usus : eoque ornamento acerrimi judicii Virgilius unicè est usus. OLLI enim et QUIANAM, et MIS et PONE, pellucent et aspergunt illam, quæ etiam in picturis est gratissima, vetustatis inimitabilem arti auctoritatem.*—

[Inst. Orat. lib. vii. c. 3.] That the Scottish language is relished by an English ear on a kindred principle, is acknow-

The Scots, and the English, languages are, indeed, nothing more than different dialects of the same radical tongue, namely, the Anglo-Saxon ; and, setting prejudice apart, (which every preference, arising from such associations, as we have mentioned, must be,) it would not perhaps be difficult, on a fair investigation of the actual merits of both the dialects, to assert the superior advantages of the Scottish to the English, for many species of original composition. But, a discussion of this kind would lead too far ; and it is but incidentally connected with the proper subject of these remarks *. It is
enough

leged by a very excellent critic : “ I suspect,” says Mr. Aikin, after bestowing a very just encomium on the *Gentle Shepherd*, as approaching nearer to nature than any other pastoral, “ that “ *Ramsay* gains a great advantage among us, by writing in the “ Scotch dialect : this not being familiar to us, and scarcely “ understood, softens the harsher parts, and gives a kind of “ foreign air, that eludes the critic’s severity.”—[Essays on Song-writing, p. 34.]

* A learned writer has published, in the Transactions of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, a Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect ; of which, as the work is not in every body’s hands, the reader may not be displeased with a short account. The author maintains this proposition ; that the Scoto-Saxon dialect was, at the time of the union of the two nations, equal in every respect, and in some respects superior, to the Anglo-Saxon dialect. He lays it down as a principle, that three
things

enough to say, that the merits of those very compositions, on which we are now to offer some remarks,

things constitute the perfection, or rather the relative superiority, of a language: richness, energy, and harmony. He observes, that a language is rich in proportion to the copiousness of its vocabulary, which will principally depend, 1. on the number of its primitive or radical words; 2. on the multiplicity of its derivations and compounds; and, 3. on the variety of its inflections. In all, or almost all of these respects, he shews the superiority of the Scottish dialect of the Saxon to the English. The Scots have all the English primitives, and many hundreds besides. The Scots have derivatives from diminution, which the English entirely want: e. g. *bat, batty, battiky; last, lassie, lassiky*. The degrees of diminution are almost unlimited: wife, wifie, wifiky, wee wifiky, wee wee wifiky, &c. Both the English, and Scots, dialects are poor in the inflections; but the Glossary to Douglas's Virgil will shew that the Scottish inflections are both more various, and less anomalous, than the English. Energy is the boast both of the English, and the Scottish, dialects; but, in this author's opinion, the Scottish poetry can furnish some compositions of far superior energy to any cotemporary English production. With respect to harmony, he gives his suffrage likewise in favour of the Scottish dialect. He observes, that the *sh* rarely occurs; its place being supplied by the simple *s*, as in *polis, punis, sal*, &c. The *s* itself is often supplied by the liquids *m* or *n*; as in *expreme, depreme; compone, depone*. Harsh combinations of consonants are avoided; as in using *sel, twal, neglek, temp, slown* or *slawn*, for *self, twelve, neglect, tempt, stolen*. Even the vowel sounds are, in this author's opinion, more harmonious, in the Scots, than in the English, dialect; as

marks, are of themselves a sufficient demonstration of the powers of that language in which, chiefly, they are composed, for many, if not for all the purposes of poetry.

The earlier of the poems of *Ramsay* were printed in single sheets of a quarto and octavo form. Of these many copies are yet to be found ; but as they are generally without a date, it is not possible to ascertain with certainty the order in which they were composed. It is probable, however, that the arrangement of the first quarto collection of the author's works, printed in 1721, is *nearly* chronological ; as, except a few of the songs, which are thrown together, the poems appear, without any connection of subject, or style ; alternately serious and burlesque, moral and satirical ; and such of them as bear their dates, are in their proper order with respect to each other.

Yet,

the open *a*, and the proper Italic sound of *i*. For further elucidation of this curious subject, the Dissertation itself must be referred to, which will abundantly gratify the critical reader. It is proper here to observe, that the remarks of this writer are the more worthy of attention, that he is himself an excellent Scottish poet, as the compositions subjoined to his Dissertation clearly evince. *Three Scottish Poems, with a previous Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect*, by the Rev. Alexander Geddes, LL. D. *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 402.

Yet, it is probable, that Ramsay had been pretty much practised in versification, before he wrote that piece, which stands first in order in the quarto volume, as it displays a facility of numbers, and a command of poetical expression, which are rarely to be seen in first attempts. *The Morning Interview* is written with ease and sprightliness, on a trifling subject, a morning visit of a beau to his mistress. It pleases, as a picture of the beau-monde of Edinburgh, near a century ago, when the celebrated *John Law*, the future projector of the *Mississippi* scheme, reigned sovereign of the fashions* ; and in the early part of that period, when *Forrester*, known afterwards as the *Polite Philosopher*, gave the laws of taste, and elegance. The mention of the *sylphs*, in *The Morning Interview*, shews, that it was composed after the publication of the second edition of *The Rape of the Lock*, in which that happy machinery was first introduced ; and, consequently, assigns it a date subsequent to 1712. We may presume, therefore, that it was a later composition,

* *Law* was an egregious fop. He was commonly termed *Jessamy John*, from perfuming his shoes with oil of jessamine. *Beau Forrester* once exhibited himself in a chintz nightgown, and was dressed and powdered by his valet de chambre, on an open balcony in the high street of Edinburgh.

composition, than that which stands next to it, in the quarto collection.

The *Elegy on Maggy Johnston* was, it is probable, among the first compositions, which the author allowed to appear in print. It is in that style, in which certainly lay his chief talent—ludicrous, and natural, description of low life. It is written in the character of a good-humoured, joyous toper, lamenting in burlesque, but cordial strains of regret, the privation of an accustomed haunt, where he and his cronies were wont to resort, for the purpose of enjoying a country dinner, and a social bowl. *Maggy Johnston* lived at a small hamlet, called *Morning side*, about a mile to the south-westward of Edinburgh. Of a similar character with this composition is the *Elegy on Lucky Wood*, who kept an alehouse in the suburbs; and who is celebrated as a rare phenomenon, an upright and conscientious *hostess*. Both these poems are characteristic of times, and of manners. The concluding stanza of the latter exhibits a stroke of genuine poetry:

O Lucky *Wood*! 'tis hard to bear
 Thy loss:—but oh! we man forbear:
 Yet fall thy memory be dear,
 *While blooms a tree;
 And after-ages' bairns will speer
 'Bout thee—and me.

In

In the same strain of burlesque composition is the elegy on *John Cowper, the Kirk-treasurer's man*, which is dated in 1714. The hint of this *jeu d'esprit* was probably taken from *Pope* and *Swift's* account of the death of *Partridge* the almanack-maker; for *John Cowper* survived this intimation of his decease, and must have had his ears frequently stunned with this ludicrous encomium on his merits, which was hawked about the streets in a halfpenny sheet. The Kirk-treasurer, and his man, who were personages of signal importance, in those days, when the discipline of *the Kirk* favoured strongly of puritanism, and the *stool of repentance* was in habitual use, were fair objects of satire to the rakish wits, who suffered from the vigilant discharge of their duty. *Pennycuik*, the younger, a poet of no mean talents, in ludicrous Scottish verse, has an elegy, in the same strain, on *Robert Forbes*, who was probably *John Cowper's* successor in office. This bard, who was a cotemporary of Ramsay, and who appears frequently to have chosen, from emulation, to celebrate the same topics of the day, has satirised the *Kirk-treasurer*, in a composition intitled, *The Presbyterian Pope*, in strains of great humour, and drollery*.

Lucky

* I have seen a burlesque imitation of Horace's ode, *Integer vitta*, in English sapphics, by *Allan Ramsay*, the younger, (au-

Lucky Spence's last Advice is from the same mint with the preceding compositions, and of its most perfect coinage. The subject being the last words of a dying bawd, I grant, is scarcely fit "for most delectable ear or eye;" but the moral is strongly pointed :

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu —————

" *Such in these moments as in all the past.*"

Even a death-bed to the hardened sinner brings no repentance. The old procuress instructs her pupils, with her latest breath, in the arts of their vocation, and dies with a glass of gin in her hand. So Pope's expiring courtier :

The courtier smooth, who forty years had shin'd
An humble servant to all human kind,
Just brought out this, when scarce his tongue could stir ;
" If—where I'm going—I could serve you, Sir."

Of a similar character, and of a tendency more strongly moral, is *The last Speech of a wretched Miser* ;

thor of some ingenious essays under the title of *The Investigator*, who inherited a considerable portion of his father's wit,) in which the wild beast of the Sabine forest, which frightened the poet, while he was singing the charms of his mistress *Lalage*, (*namque me sylva lupus in Sabina*,) is parodied by the sudden appearance of the *Kirk-treasurer's man* to a rake, in his nocturnal rambles.

Miser ; a satire of very high merit, whether we consider the intimate knowledge of human nature, which it displays, the force of humorous description, or the salutary lesson, which it inculcates. The character of a miser, even from the pencil of a *Moliere*, is not drawn with greater force of expression, or truth of colouring ; nor has the power of this most odious vice to extinguish every moral feeling, and sentiment of natural affection, ever been set in a stronger light of reprobation :

O gear ! I held you lang the gither ;
 For you I starv'd my guid auld mither,
 And to Virginia seld my brither,
 And crush'd my wife :
 But now I 'm gawn I kenna whither,
 To leave my life.

My life ! my God ! my spirit yearns,
 Not on my kindred, wife, or bairns ;
 Sic are but very laigh concerns,
 Compar'd with thee ;
 When now this mortal rattle warns
 Me, I man die.

It seems to have been a favourite whim of Ramsay's, as it was the practice of the age, to write elegies on the living : a fancy, in which there is fully as much propriety, as in *familiar Letters* from the *dead* to the *living* : the former is a harmless jest ; the latter, however well intended, an awful,
and

and presumptuous, fiction.—We may freely amuse ourselves with *The Life and Acts*, or,

An Elegy on *Patie Birnie*,
 The famous fidler of Kinghorn,
 Wha gart the lieges laugh and girn ay,
 Aft till the cock proclaim'd the morn.

This catgut-scraper, like the minstrels of old, was a poet as well as a musician ; a rogue too of infinite humour ; in short, completely versant in the arts of his profession. From the mention of this Scotch *Crowdero*, we are led to remark, that the strongest test of the merits of *Ramsay*, as a characteristic painter of nature, and of his peculiar excellence, in humorous description, is the compliment paid him by the inimitable *Hogarth*, who dedicated his twelve plates of *Hudibras*, “ To Allan
 “ *Ramsay of Edinburgh*, and *William Wood of Great*
 “ *Houghton in Northamptonshire*.”

The silken plaid, which, at the period of the Union, was the universal attire of the Scottish ladies, and which is capable of more graceful variety of adjustment, than any other piece of female dress *, was beginning to be laid aside by many of
 the

* See the beautiful antique statue of the vestal, improperly called the *Zingara* ; and the figure of the bride in the *Aldobrandini* marriage.

the fair sex, after the rebellion in 1715, probably from being considered as a mark of a party. *Ramsay* had no dislike to it, on that account, and he admired it as an elegant and decorous piece of dress. He resolved to vindicate its merits, and turn, if possible, the tide of fashion, which threatened to strip his countrywomen of their appropriate ornament. *Tartana, or the Plaid*, is written in English verse, and affords of itself sufficient proof, that had its author been a native of the southern part of the island, he would have held no mean rank in the catalogue of English poets. *Ramsay* would have been a poet, in any language, if, as he truly observes, “ good imagery, just similes, and
 “ all manner of ingenious thoughts, in a well-laid
 “ design, disposed into numbers, is poetry *.” The *Tartana* accords, in every particular, with this standard. In celebrating the distinguishing dress of the Caledonian nymphs, they themselves are with propriety his muses :

Ye Caledonian beauties, who have long
 Been both the muse, and subject of my song,
 Assist your bard, who in harmonious lays,
 Designs the glories of your plaid to raise :
 How my fond breast with blazing ardour glows,
 Whene’er my song on you just praise bestows !

Phœbus,

* Preface to the 4to.

Phœbus, and his imaginary nine,
 With me have lost the title of divine ;
 To no such shadows will I homage pay ;
 These to my real muses must give way :
 My muses, who on smooth meand'ring Tweed,
 Stray through the groves, or grace the clover mead ;
 Or those who bathe themselves where haughty Clyde
 Does roaring o'er his lofty cataracts ride ;
 Or you who on the banks of gentle Tay,
 Drain from the flowers the early dews of May ;
 Inspir'd by you, what poet can desire
 To warm his genius at a brighter fire ?

He begins by celebrating the antiquity of this attire :

The Plaid's antiquity comes first in view :
 Precedence to antiquity is due :
 Antiquity contains a potent spell
 To make even things of little worth excel ;
 To smallest subjects gives a glaring dash,
 Protecting high-born idiots from the lash :
 Much more 'tis valued when with merit plac'd,
 It graces merit, and by merit's grac'd.

With what dexterity is the side-stroke of satire here given ! it is the favourite weapon of the poet, and he is completely master of its exercise.

He proceeds to contrast the easy elegance of the plaid, with the stiff and formal drapery of the French toilette. He notices its additional value, as being the labour of the ladies' hands ; he reviews
 the

the most remarkable of the Scottish beauties, who wore this becoming attire ; he enumerates its properties, as shielding alike from heat, from cold, from rain, from dust ; and, finally, as improving, by half-concealing the female charms. He deduces its origin, in a beautiful fiction, from the Pagan mythology, adding a new amour of Jupiter to the Ovidian catalogue.

In the two supplemental cantos of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, the poet appears again in the style, in which he peculiarly excelled—humorous description of vulgar life. The first canto is one of the many compositions of that most accomplished prince, *James the First* of Scotland, of whom says Major, the historian, “ *Codices plurimi et cantilenæ memoriter adhuc apud Scotos habentur* *.” It describes

* The circumstance of *James V.* inheriting this talent of his ancestor, and having like him composed humorous ballads, particularly the well-known song of the *Gaberlunzie-man*, describing a frolic of his own in the disguise of a beggar, has given rise to the doubt, whether the poem of *Christ's Kirk* was not likewise the composition of the latter prince: but the controversy is decided by a twofold mode of proof: 1. Intrinsic evidence ; and, 2. Positive testimony. The language of the first canto of *Christ's Kirk* will appear to those who are critically skilled in the Scottish dialect, to be evidently that of a much older period,

then

scribes with great humour and pleasantry a brawl, at a country wake, or dancing bout, probably on occasion

than the language of the *Gaberlunzie-man*, or the common language of the age of *James V.* who was born in 1511, and died in 1542. The improvement, or at least the change produced by the lapse of a century, is plainly observable, on the slightest comparison of the two. In the *Gaberlunzie-man*, the language is very little different, from that which is spoken, at present, by the vulgar in Tweeddale, Clydesdale, the Merse, and Lothians, the Lowlands of Scotland; nor is there a single word or phrase in that song, which the common people in those parts of the country, at this day, do not understand. In the poem of *Christ's Kirk*, there occur such words and phrases almost in every stanza—*thir lasses licht of laits—gluvis of the raffel richt shune of the straits—when men them nicht—her rude was reid—scho bad gae chat him—as he could lanks—the kensie cleikit to the cavell—he cheisit a flane—cheir him—chard him—ane hasty bensure callit Hary—the reird raise rudely wi the rapps—he was not yowden,* &c. &c. These are expressions, which no Scotsman of the present day can interpret without the help of a glossary, or without etymological conjecture, and study of the context. The vicious taste of alliteration in poetry was prevalent in the age of *James I.* It was a favourite ornament of his own style; as the ballad of *Peeblis to the Play, or at Beltayn*, proves; a composition, in every circumstance of subject, style, and manner, so entirely resembling *Christ's Kirk*, as to leave no doubt, that they are the work of the same hand. Alliteration abounds in the first canto of *Christ's Kirk*; but it was exploded in the time of *James V.* at least with all men of taste: there is not a trace of it in the *Gaberlunzie-man*. In short, there is as remarkable a difference

occasion of a wedding. “The king,” says *Ramsay*, “having painted the rustic squabble with an uncommon spirit, ambitious to imitate so great an original, I put a stop to the war, called a congress, and made them sign a peace, that the world might have their picture in the more agreeable hours of drinking, dancing, and singing.” This was a bold attempt; but the poet knew his own powers, and has executed his part in a most masterly manner. The quarrel is put an end to, in the first stanza, by the intervention of a tremendous figure, *Θεός από μυχώνης*. It is not

—— the blue-ey’d maid,
Who to its sheath returns the shining blade :

But

difference betwixt the style of the latter composition, and that of the former, (though similarity of subject would naturally have induced similarity of expression,) as there is between the language of *Lydgate* (I had almost said of *Chaucer*) and that of *Spencer*. But the positive testimony is decisive. *Bannatyne* was a cotemporary of *James V.*; he was a curious collector of poetry, and, without doubt, perfectly well acquainted with all the king’s compositions. *James V.* died in 1542, in the thirty-first year of his age. *Bannatyne*’s collection, the labour of many years, was finished in 1568; and he asserts *Christ’s Kirk* to have been composed by *James the First*—“*Quod King James I.*” If this be an erroneous assertion, it would be just such a mistake, as if *Dodsley*, in his Collection, had assigned *Gray’s Elegy* in a Country Churchyard to *Abraham Cowley*. See various other arguments in *Poetical Remains of James I.* printed at Edinburgh in 1783.

But a personage equally awful :

But now the bauld gude-wife of Baith,
Arm'd wi' a great kail-gully,
Came belly-flaught, and loot an aith,
She 'd gar them a' be hooly
Fou fast that day.

Terrified into good order, after a slight skirmish between a noisy poltroon and a termagant, the parties with one consent shake hands, adjust their dishevelled locks, tie their cravats, and call in the fidler. A scene ensues of frolic and jollity, which furnishes a picture that *Hogarth* could not have easily improved. The variety of humorous characters, and their several employments in the piece, evince the most thorough acquaintance with rustic life and manners. The bold and sturdy hostess; the *bragadocio*, who lay quiet while the fray was at its height, and whose courage rises when the danger is over; the priggish *taylor*, who affects the airs of a courtly dancer, *Falkland bred*; the little short-legged gentleman, who makes up in pride what he wants in stature, and who damns the *fiddle* and calls for the *pipes*; *Tam Lutter*, who scorns all amusement but the tankard; the self-important *parish-clerk*, (the letter-gae of haly rhyme,) who sits at the head of the board, and whose opinions, it was unlawful to contradict, or question;—all are painted with exquisite humour; each with the strongest

strongest characters of discrimination, and with the strictest consonance to nature, from which the poet drew.

The two supplemental cantos of *Christ's Kirk* were written, the one in 1715, and the other in 1718. The latter is of equal merit with the former. It opens with a description of the morning, as rising on the jolly villagers, who are unusually drowsy from the last night's debauch. Here, let us, by the way, remark the difference between *witty*, and *humorous* composition. *Butler*, and *Ramsay*, were each possessed of both wit, and humour, in no ordinary measure; but the former quality predominated with the English bard, the latter with the Scottish. Butler thus describes the morning, ludicrously, but wittily :

The sun had long since in the lap
Of Thetis taken out his nap,
And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn
From black to red began to turn.

This pleases as an ingenious piece of wit. The whimsicalness of the comparison makes us smile; but it is no just picture of nature, and therefore it is not humorous. Now, mark the humour, with which Ramsay describes the dawn, as rising upon his jolly company at the bridal : a little coarseness

must be excused ; the picture, otherwise, had not been faithful :

Now frae th' east nook of Fife, the dawn
 Speel'd westlines up the lift ;
 Carles, wha heard the cock had crawn,
 Begoud to rax and rift ;
 And greedy wives, wi' girning thrawn,
 Cry'd, " Lasses, up to thrift."
 Dogs barked, and the lads frae hand
 Bang'd to their breeks like drift,
 Be break o' day.

Humour must be consonant to nature : it is nature seen in absurd and ludicrous aspects. Wit gives an apparent and fanciful resemblance to nature, but it requires, for its very essence, a real contrariety. This canto describes the events of the day, following the marriage. The friends of the young couple bring each his present of some utensil, or piece of furniture, which is laid down on the bed, with a compliment, or a banter. The morning is spent in receiving these tokens of kindness, the day in frolic and sports peculiar to the occasion, and it is concluded with a hearty carousal, where the main object is to send the new-married man to bed as drunk as possible, that his wife may know at once the best and worst of her bargain.—Such is the plan of Ramsay's *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, a composition of very high merit, in its own particular style,
 and

and which will preserve the memory of customs and manners, long after they have ceased to be observed, or are known in actual life.

The review of the humorous compositions of Ramfay prompts an observation, which naturally rises from the subject: the pleasure derived from ridicule is felt in a much stronger degree by some temperaments than by others. There are even writers of acuteness and discernment, who condemn that pleasure as gross or vulgar; and, therefore, as indicating the want of a delicate taste. Lord Chesterfield thought it unworthy of a man of fashion to laugh. The author of *Elements of Criticism*, a work, which displays a great knowledge of human nature, but which misleads sometimes from over-refinement, asserts *, that “ Ridicule
“ arises chiefly from pride, which is a selfish pas-
“ sion. It is therefore, at best, but a gross plea-
“ sure. A people, it is true, must have emerged
“ out of barbarity, before they can have a taste
“ for ridicule; but it is too rough an entertain-
“ ment for the highly polished and refined. Ci-
“ cero discerns in Plautus a happy talent for ridi-
“ cule,

* Chapter ii. part 2.

“ cule, and a peculiar delicacy of wit: but Horace, who made a figure in the court of Augustus, when taste was considerably purified, declares against the lowness and roughness of that author’s raillery. Ridicule,” continues the same author, “ is banished France, and is losing ground in England.” This appears to me to be a strained apology for the want of a natural, most agreeable, and most useful perception; and the whole doctrine here laid down is, as I apprehend, founded in error. Ridicule does not chiefly arise from pride, which is indeed a selfish passion, and could furnish only a very gross pleasure: but it arises from a strong sense of propriety and impropriety, and a nice discernment both of natural and of moral beauty and deformity. The violation of that propriety, whether by involuntary error, by folly, or absurdity, or even by some slighter vices, if not in such a degree as to excite an indignant or angry emotion, produces laughter, which carries with it some degree of scorn and contempt, not arising from any proud feeling of excellence in ourselves, but merely from observing the want of it in others: and here we see the moral end of the perception, which, in truth, is to correct and reform. Men, and nations, when they become too refined, lose that nice perception of propriety and impropriety; for the commerce of the world, by
presenting

presenting habitual violations of propriety, occasions the breach of it to be regarded with indifference. This is the cause why ridicule is banished France, and why it is perhaps losing ground in England: a truth therefore little to the honour of any nation of which it can be predicated. With respect to the last, however, we would fain hope that the observation is unjust. Lord Chesterfield, by birth an Englishman, was a Frenchman both in manners and in principles. The sentiment of Horace is suitable to a courtier of the reign of Augustus; his morality was that of a corrupted age, and his taste was influenced by that morality. The times of Cicero, evil as he thought them, were not so refined; and he was himself a man of rigid virtue: let us then cherish the sentiment of ridicule, as a proof of uncorrupted manners; and let us value it for its moral usefulness. Woe be to that nation, where it either ceases to be generally felt, or (in the approach of that fatal period) becomes an object of censure to the critic, or of condemnation to the moralist.

The City of *Edinburgh's Address to the Country*, is dated in November 1718. It commences playfully, and, in imitation of the epistolary form, which is used in public writings that are issued by the sovereign:

From me, Edina, to the brave, and fair,
 Health, joy, and love, and banishment of care :
 Forasmuch as bare fields, &c.

The pleasures and comforts of a city life, in winter, are delineated with great spirit and vivacity ; and the colouring is glowing and attractive. The picture has likewise its peculiar merit, from exhibiting the appropriate features of the Scottish capital, with respect to customs and modes of life, at the period in which it was drawn. The greater cities, the residences of courts, possess a similarity, or rather uniformity of character, of which the features have been so frequently drawn, that the delineation has lost, in a great measure, the charm of novelty. Edinburgh, possessing the rank, and in no small degree the splendor of a metropolis, but no longer the residence of a court, promises from that circumstance to exhibit manners of her own : and this in many respects is really the case. Still, however, the general characters are nearly the same. *Milton*, in the latter part of his *Allegro*, has given a masterly sketch of them :

Towered cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men, &c.

It is amusing to mark the same, or nearly similar ideas delineated by two writers of so different a character and genius as *Milton* and *Ramsay* ; nor
 is

is the comparison dishonourable to the former, nor the contrast discreditable to the latter. The muse of *Ramsay* wears, as usual, her comic sock ; while that of *Milton*, even in a moment of gaiety, preserves her air of majesty, and deigns not to divest herself of the buskin.

The poem of *Content*, though displaying passages of considerable merit, is languid on the whole, from the trite nature of the subject, the awkward manner in which the piece is conducted, and its inordinate length. *Silenus*, conjured by the poet to

Retail his gather'd knowledge, and disclose
What state of life enjoys the most repose ;

describes a variety of characters, without order or connection, who, from some prevalent evil passion or vicious conformation of mind, fail to attain that happiness which they pursue, and are a prey to discontent. *Silenus* ends his song, and the poet falls asleep ; when *Minerva* appears to him in a dream, and sets out with him as his guide “to find
“ the habitation of Content.” They travel through camps, crowded cities, warehouses, and fragrant fields ; and at length, by means of an old telescope made by *Socrates* and *Epictetus*, they discover the object of their search, in a palace on the top of a
f 4 hill.

hill. *Touchstone Disappointment* guards the door, and tries the merits of various travellers, male and female, who seek admission into this residence of bliss. Of these, some of the characters are painted with propriety and skill. The apostrophe to the miser is vigorous, both in the thought, and the expression :

Poor griping thing ! how useless is thy breath !
 While nothing 's so much long'd for as thy death.
 How meanly hast thou spent thy lease of years,
 A slave to poverty, to toils and fears !
 And all to vie with some black rugged hill,
 Whose rich contents millions of chests can fill.
 As round the greedy rock clings to the mine,
 And hinders it in open day to shine,
 Till diggers hew it from the spar's embrace,
 Making it circle, stamp'd with Cæsar's face :
 So dost thou hoard, and from thy prince purloin
 His useful image, and thy country's coin ;
 Till gaping heirs have freed th' imprison'd slave,
 When, to their comfort, thou hast fill'd a grave.

*Wealth, or the Woody** ; a Poem on the South Sea :
 written June 1720. At a time when this fascinating project was at its height, and the nation seemed intoxicated to the utmost pitch, *Ramsay* appears to have entertained a just suspicion of the solidity of a
 scheme,

* The *woody* is the gallows.

fcheme, which promised boundless wealth to a people, without the smallest exertion of talents or of industry ; and this composition is evidently intended to put his credulous countrymen on their guard against a delusion, which he foresaw would entice thousands to their ruin. After a poignant description of the effect produced by a sudden change of prosperous fortune on native meanness of soul ; the insolence and pride attending undeserved elevation ; and painting, with the pencil of satire, the fastidious airs assumed by those who, a few months before, were the tenants of a garret,

And only durst, in twilight or the dark,
Steal to a common cook's, with half a mark ;

how prophetic is the following anticipation of what a similar term of time might probably produce !

This I foresee, and time shall prove I 'm right,
(For he 's nae poet wants the second sight,)
 When autumn's stores are ruck'd up in the yard,
And fleet and snaw dreeps down cauld winter's beard ;
When bleak November's winds make forests bare,
And with splenetic vapours fill the air ;
Then, then, in gardens, parks, or silent glen,
When trees bear nothing else, they 'll carry—men.

The Prospect of Plenty follows : to the chimerical hopes of inexhaustible riches from the project of the *South Sea*, the poet now opposes the certain prospect

spect of national wealth from the prosecution of the fisheries in the *North Sea*; thus judiciously pointing the attention of his countrymen to the solid fruits of patient industry, and contrasting these with the airy projects of idle speculation. Of industry the certain consequence is plenty, a gradual enlargement of all the comforts of society, the advancement of the useful, and the encouragement of the elegant arts, the cultivation of talents, the refinement of manners, the increase of population:—all that contributes either to national prosperity, or to the rational enjoyments of life. The composition and structure of this piece are less deserving of encomium than the wisdom of its precepts. An unskilful use is made of the heathen mythology. *Amphitrite* claims the song: *Nereus* rises from his watery bed; and *Oceanus* with pleasure hears him sing—of herring-busses filling the northern seas—“in order rang’d before the muse’s eye.” The measure, which is heroic, is at variance with the dialect and phraseology, which are provincial and burlesque.

The elapse of a few months completely justified the poet’s foresight, in the preceding composition: and in an *Epistle to Lord Ramsay*, intitled *The Rise and Fall of the Stocks*, he relates the origin and progress of the south sea bubble, till its burst into air.

air. This piece is dated the 25th March 1721. It is a strong and vivid picture, contrasting the tumultuous infatuation that prevailed while the project was at its height, with the deep despondency that attended its dissolution. He cautions his countrymen from giving way to this despondency : he labours to teach them the best improvement of their misfortunes, and presents to their minds the prospect of a bright sunshine, which is to break forth after a gloomy morning.

On the same subject, in a happy and frolicksome moment, our poet wrote *The Satyr's Comic Project for recovering a young bankrupt Stock-jobber*. It is a parody of the well-known ballad of "Colin's Complaint."

By the side of a murmuring stream,
A shepherd forsaken was laid, &c.

On the shore of a low ebbing sea,
A sighing young jobber was seen,
Staring wishfully at an old tree,
Which grew on the neighbouring green.

The *Project*, if it want the merit of novelty, has the superior recommendation of constant repetition, with complete success. The young stock-jobber, in despair of retrieving his broken fortune, and
meditating

meditating to purchase a halter, is addressed by a *satyr* :

A fatyr that wander'd along,
 With a laugh to his raving reply'd ;
 The savage maliciously fung,
 And jok'd, while the stockjobber cry'd :

Come, hold up thy head, foolish wight ;
 I'll teach thee thy loss to retrieve ;
 Observe me this project aright,
 And think not of hanging, but live.

Hecatiffa, conceited and old,
 Affects in her airs to seem young ;
 Her jointure yields plenty of gold,
 And plenty of nonsense her tongue.

Lay siege to her for a short space,
 Ne'er mind that she's wrinkled and grey ;
 Extol her for beauty and grace,
 And doubt not of winning the day, &c.

There is no ancient poet, whose compositions have so frequently been the subject of imitation as *Horace*. The reasons are : he is a jocosé and festive moralist ; his philosophy has nothing of the austere ; even his satire is tempered with good-humour ; and his pieces are short, and within the compass of a moderate exertion of the imitator. But, for these reasons likewise, we have many unskilful attempts ; for the happy ease of the composition is judged to be a proof, that it may be easily composed. Yet, observe what was the opinion of one of the best of the

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the English critics, in reviewing the imitations of Horace by one of the greatest of the English poets :
 “ To fall short of the original cannot be deemed
 “ a disgrace to him, (Pope,) or to any other
 “ writer, if we consider the extreme difficulty of
 “ transfusing into another language the subtle
 “ beauties of Horace’s dignified familiarity, and
 “ the uncommon union of so much facility and
 “ force *.”

The above remark, however, is not strictly applicable to the imitations of *Horace* by *Ramsay*, as he had not properly the task of translating from his original. He fairly tells us that his chief acquaintance with Horace was at second-hand, and through the medium of English translations †. But this is no diminution of his merits, as we do not find that he has borrowed any thing of the dress or manner in which former translators had clothed the thoughts of the Roman poet. He has clad him according to his own fancy, in the general *costume* of his native country. *Ramsay* was himself (if the expression may be allowed) a true
Horatian

* Warton’s Essay on Pope, vol. ii. p. 338.

† “ I understand Horace but faintly in the original, and
 “ yet can feast on his beautiful thoughts dressed in English.”
 [Preface to Ramsay’s Poems.]

Horatian genius. In taste, in passion, and in sentiment, a friend to the innocent, because moderate, gratifications of convivial intercourse : an Epicurean in every thing, but laxity of moral and religious principle.

To *William Earl of Dalhousie*, the chief of his name and family, the poet addresses, with propriety, his imitation of the first ode of *Horace* to *Mecænas* :

Mecænas atavis edite regibus.

Dalhousie of an auld descent.

This composition, which, from its fidelity to the thought, and happy imitation of the style of the original, might almost fall under the description of a translation, is distinguished from that species of writing, solely, by this peculiarity, in which lies the chief merit of the copyist, an exact adaptation of the different characters in the original to modern times, and to the manners of his own country :

Some like to study, some to play,
Some on the *Links* to win the day,
And gar the courser rin like wood, &c.

*Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat, &c.*

The Lothian farmer he likes best
 To be of gude faugh riggs posselt;
 And fen upon a frugal stock,
 Where his forbears had us'd the yoke.

*Illum de proprio condidit horreo,
 Quicquid de Libycis versitur areis,
 Gaudentem patrios findere sarculo*

Agros. —————

In the piece, which immediately follows, or *Horace's* address *Ad navim Virgilium Athenas vehementem*, this peculiarity is wanting. There is no adaptation of the sentiments of the Roman poet to modern times; but instead of it, a burlesque of the original, by substituting in place of its lofty imagery and serious style, a ludicrous *caricature* of its figures, and a vulgar phraseology. The worst is, that this burlesque is not professed; nor is it universal. Grave and judicious moral sentiments are illustrated by ludicrous figures, and debased by vulgar expression. Thus the topic of the origin of evil, which the Roman poet attributes to the crime of *Prometheus* in stealing fire from heaven, and which he treats in terms of suitable solemnity, is, after a grave introduction, thrown most unseasonably into ridicule by low and ludicrous phraseology:

Audacious men at nought will stand,
 When vicious passions have command:

Prometheus

Prometheus ventur'd up, and flaw
 A lowan coal frae heaven's high ha' ;
 Unsonfy thrift ! which fevers brought
 In bikes, which fowk like fybows hought :
 Then death, erft flaw, began to ling,
 And fast as haps to dart his fting.
 Neift, Dædalus muft contradiët
 Nature forfooth, and feathers ftick
 Upon his back.——

This is injudicious : the fubject might admit of a ludicrous parody ; but we have here only a burlefque tranflation, and that but awkwardly performed.

Of a character widely diftinct from the preceding, is the imitation of Horace's ode to Seflius, "*Solvitur acris hyems.*" Here, the native language of the poet has perfect propriety. The imagery of the original is familiar ; it is a juft picture of nature. The return of fpring is described as it is feen, and felt : the renovated beauty of inanimate nature, and the gaiety thence communicated to all animated beings, admirably described in the original, is pictured in the copy with no other change than the adaptation, by the Scotifh poet, to the fcenery and manners of his own country.

Here *Ramsay* was truly within the fphere of his peculiar talents. In this ode to *Seflius*, and yet
 more

more remarkably in the imitation of “*Vides ut alta
stet nive candidum, Soracte*,” he displays a singular felicity of genius. Of this most beautiful composition I have no scruple to affirm, what I believe will be assented to by all, who are competent to judge of poetry alike in either language, that it surpasses the merit of the original :

Look up to Pentland’s towering taps,
Bury’d beneath great wreaths of snaw.

As the Roman bard throws his eye on the Tuscan *Soracte*, with what propriety does the Scottish poet, the citizen of Edinburgh, direct his prospect to the *Pentland hills* ! In the original the description is less particular, and the moral is more sententiously expressed, than in the copy. But this appears to me to constitute an additional merit of the latter. The scenes are not described by their general features ; they are pictured to the eye ; and the amplitude of easy and jocular expression gives an interest more approaching to the dramatic :

Driving their baws frae whins or tee,
There’s no nae gowfers to be seen ;
Nor douffer fowk wyfing a jee
The byafs-bowls on Tamson’s green.
Then fling on coals, and ripe the ribs,
And beek the house baith butt and ben ;
That mutchkin stowp it hads but dribs,
Then let’s get in the tappit hen.

Good claret best keeps out the cauld,
 And drives away the winter soon;
 It makes a man baith gash and bauld,
 And heaves his saul beyond the moon.

Who but a kindred genius could have thus
 delightfully paraphrased “ *Donec virenti canities*
 “ *abest,*” &c.

Be sure ye dinna quit the grip
 Of ilka joy when ye are young,
 Before auld age your vitals nip,
 And lay ye twafald o’er a rung.
 Sweet youth’s a blyth and heartsome time;
 Then, lads and lasses, while ’tis May,
 Gae pou the gowan in its prime,
 Before it wither and decay:
 Watch the fast minutes of delyte,
 When Jenny speaks beneath her breath,
 And kisses, laying a’ the wyte
 On you, if she kepp ony skaith.
 “ Haith ye’re ill-bred,” she’ll smiling say;
 “ Ye’ll worry me, ye greedy rook:”
 Syne frae your arms she’ll rin away,
 And hide herself in some dark nook.
 Her laugh will lead you to the place
 Where lies the happiness you want,
 And plainly tell you to your face,
 Nineteen nay-fays are half a grant.

I am well aware that this is truly *φωναυτα ουνεροισι*,
 and that none but a Scotsman, and he a man of
 taste and a scholar, can fully appreciate the merit
 of

of this imitation, or thoroughly conceive its beauties : but even an Englishman may discern a part of the merits of the *original*, although this is all that perhaps he can do.

But the talents of Ramsay are not only to be admired in that species of poetry, which falls under the description of free translation, or imitation : in original compositions of his own, he has adopted the Horatian manner, with singular felicity, both of sentiment, and expression : of this an admirable specimen is “ *The Epistle to Mr. — on his Mariage ;*” it is *multum in parvo*, a text for many homilies. The wisdom of the poet’s counsels will be acknowledged by all, who are competent to judge of them ; and we relish his precepts the better, that it is the easy friend, and not the pedantic moralist, who addresses us. In the *Epistle to Robert Yarde, of Devonshire, Esq.* we discern the moral and philosophic spirit of his Master, the just estimate of human enjoyments, the well-regulated mind, which balances the misfortunes with the pleasures of life, and sagely inculcates the great lesson of contentment with the lot assigned to us. The manner too is easy, familiar, and spirited : the Scottish dialect, in which it is composed, gives additional *naivetè*, though we regret, in a few expressions, a tincture of vulgarity. In this pleasing-

composition, which I am inclined to class among the best of our author's lesser pieces, we have an amplified commentary, and beautiful illustration, of the Horatian text—

Auream quisquis mediocritatem
Diligit ———

or, yet more strictly, of the philosophic paradox of *Hesiod*, Νήπιοις εὖδ' ἰσασιν ὅσω πλεον ἡμῖσιν παντός; which *Cowley* has so beautifully illustrated in his essay *Of Agriculture*.

In the *Address to his Book*, with which he concludes the first volume of his poems, our author has imitated, with singular success, the manner of the Roman lyric. A moderate portion of vanity is the chartered right of a poet. If he augur not for himself immortality, there is perhaps a fair presumption, that he will never attain it. Yet, such is the pride of our nature, and our jealousy of all assuming pretensions, we cannot bear to see this sentiment seriously entertained, or too confidently asserted: it will then offend by its arrogance; and its imprudent cherisher will justly share the fate, which *Shakespeare* announces to that “ vaulting
“ ambition, which o'erleaps itself, and falls on the
“ other side.” It is a wiser policy to veil it in the garb of jocularitv; as if the poet even ridiculed
himself

himself for his presumption. Thus Ramsay, after expressing his dread of the worst of all fates—neglect, and oblivion, addresses, very happily, his “ dear venturous book :”

Away sic fears ! gae spread my fame,
And fix me an immortal name ;
Ages to come shall thee revive,
And gar thee with new honours live :
The future critics, I foresee,
Shall have their notes on notes on thee ;
The wits unborn shall beauties find,
That never entered in my mind.

As the Horatian manner is imitated in the preceding pieces, and in the excellent address “ To Mr. William Aikman ;” the *Epistle to Mr. Arbuckle* is an imitation, no less successful, of the *Hudibrastic*. The poet’s picture of himself is humorous and spirited; as if drawn by the pencil of Hogarth, we see him reflected from his own mirror. He delineates, with equal spirit, his mental, as his corporeal qualities ; and assuming nothing, that tends to extraordinary exaltation, we are the more apt to give him credit for the fidelity of his draught. Indeed, the character allowed him by the wits, and poets, who were his contemporaries, is sufficient evidence, that an overweening conceit of his own abilities was none of his defects. *Pope, Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, Steele*, were all admirers,

and patrons, of our Scottish bard. *Somerville* was his correspondent and encomiast. The writer of these pages has it on authority, which he cannot question, (a near relation of the celebrated Dr. Arbuthnot,) that *Pope* was particularly delighted with the *Gentle Shepherd*; and was wont to make *Arbuthnot* interpret to him such passages, as he could not easily understand: it is, therefore, with justice, that the ingenious *Sir William Scott of Thirlestane*, who died at Edinburgh on the 8th of October 1725, records, in an inscription which is not unworthy of the pen of a *Catullus*, the admission of the portrait of *Ramsay* among those genuine poets, whose images adorned the temple of *Apollo*:

*Effigies Allani Ramsæi, Poëtæ Scoti, inter cæteras Poëtarum
Imagines in Templo Apollonis suspensa:*

*Ductam Parrhasiâ videtis arte
Allani effigiem, favente Phæbo,
Qui Scotis numeros suos, novoque
Priscam restituit vigore linguam.
Hanc Phæbus tabulam, hanc novem sorores
Suspendunt lepidis jocis dicatam:
Gaudete, O Veneres, Cupidinesque,
Omnes illecebræ, facctiaque,
Plausus edite; nunc in æde Phæbi
Splendet conspicuo decore, vestri
Allani referens tabella vultus*.*

In

* *Poemata D. Gulielmi Scoti de Thirlestane*; printed along with *Seleçta Poemata Archibaldi Pitcairni*, &c. *Edinburgi* 1727.

In mentioning the poetical epistles of *Ramsay*, the facetious correspondence between him and *Lieutenant William Hamilton* must not be forgotten. This gentleman, who seems to have inherited a talent for easy versification, with a considerable vein for humour, had figured in Scottish verse, several years before *Ramsay* was known as a poet; nor is it improbable, that on some of the humorous compositions of the latter, our author formed his own manner, in those burlesque pieces, which are in the Scottish dialect, and peculiar measure of six lines; as the *Elegy on Maggy Johnston*, &c. In *Watson's Collection*, printed at Edinburgh in 1711, we find *Hamilton's Elegy on Bonny Heck*, which is alluded to in these familiar epistles between him and *Ramsay*, and justly praised. He sustains his part in this correspondence with great spirit, nor is it easy to decide, which of the poets has the superiority in the contest.

The *Fables* of *Ramsay* are not of uniform merit. In some of his compositions of this kind he has attained to a high pitch of excellence; in others he is beneath mediocrity. If we may judge from the very small number of eminent fabulists, there is no species of composition, which is more difficult, than that of a perfect fable. *Æsop*, who, if not the inventor, was probably among the earliest of

the writers of fable, seems to have had no other idea in his compositions than to convey some moral truth in a short and apposite allegory. Most of his fables are of a serious nature. Such of them as possess any portion of festivity, as the Fox and the Crow with the cheese in its beak, seem to derive it purely from the accidental nature of the story. The latter fabulists have annexed other requisites to the composition of a fable, which tend to raise it in dignity and usefulness. The fables of *Phædrus* gave the first example of that ingenuity, or *naïveté* of expression, and of that flyness of wit, *vafrities ingenii*, which have, since his time, been esteemed the characteristics of this species of writing. In the former of these qualities, *la Fontaine*, the chief of the modern disciples of *Phædrus*, is supremely excellent; but with regard to the latter, he errs from an exuberance of wit, which derogates from the superior requisite of simplicity. In reality, the latter character seems now to be fixed, as the essential requisite of fable; and where simplicity is preserved in thought and in expression, the poet may indulge his genius even for the highest efforts of his art, the power of descriptive painting, the tender, the pathetic, perhaps even the sublime. In this higher walk of fable, the illustrious *Desbillons* stands perhaps far removed beyond competition,

The

The fables of *Gay* have wit, and ease, and elegance; but they are deficient in simplicity. They fail yet more in dramatic propriety. A good fabulist is he who, like a good dramatist,

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique :

There must be a nice adjustment between the real characters and the assumed. *Gay's* animals sustain the parts of statesmen, philosophers, beaux, and critics; and they act in their fictitious characters with sufficient aptitude and address; but we lose sight entirely of their original nature: we seldom perceive a trace remaining of the fox, the elephant, the monkey, or the mastiff: any other animals might have been employed to fill their parts: the apologue, therefore, is deficient in characteristic, or in dramatic propriety.

The best of *Ramsay's* fables are, *The As and the Brock*, *The Caterpillar and the Ant*, *The two Cats* and *the Cheese*. These, with the utmost propriety of character, have all the *naïveté* of *Phædrus* and *la Fontaine*, with the wit and ease of *Gay*. The rest are entitled to no high commendation.

The comic powers of *Ramsay* found a much superior field of exercise in his *tales*: and of these it is much to be regretted that he has left so few. *The Monk and the Miller's Wife* would of itself be
his

his passport to immortality, as a comic poet. In this capacity, he might enter the lists with *Chaucer*, and *Boccacio*, with no great risk of discomfiture. Though far their inferior in acquired address, his native strength was perhaps not widely disproportionate. Of this admirable tale, I conceive he has the merit of the invention; as the story is not to be found in any of the older writers, as *Sacchetti*, *Boccacio*, or in the *Cento Novelle antiche*. In a few circumstances there is indeed a small resemblance to the 73d of the *Cent nouvelles Nouvelles*, intitled *l'Oiseau en la Cage*, which barely affords a presumption, that *Ramsay* may have read that story; but in all the material circumstances, his *Monk and the Miller's Wife* is original. A story of more festive humour could not have been devised. The characters are sustained with consummate propriety; the manners are true to nature; and poetic justice is most strictly observed in the winding up of the piece. We are amused with the ingenuous simplicity and credulity of the honest miller: we are delighted with the malicious roguery of the young student; who amply revenges himself, yet, with infinite good-nature, spares his hostess, and her sanctimonious gallant, that utter disgrace, which they might have justly expected at his offended hands.

Of the other pieces intitled *Tales*, *The Lure* is the best : yet it is more properly a satirical fable or allegory. The narrative and descriptive parts have much merit : but the moral of the fiction scarcely atones for its indelicacy. *The Tale of Three Bonnets* is rather a dramatic dialogue, than a proper tale. It is a severe political satire against his countrymen, for agreeing to the union of the kingdoms. Had our author lived to the present age, he would have confessed the absurdity of his prejudices, and borne testimony to the falsehood of his own predictions. Abstracting from the error of its opinions, we see the genius of the author in the characteristic painting, the knowledge of life and manners, and the keen edge of satire, which are conspicuous in this performance. It was among those compositions, which the author, perhaps grown wiser as a politician, did not admit into the collection of his works ; though it appears in a separate pamphlet, along with the two tales before mentioned, “ printed for the author, and sold at “ his shop, Edinburgh.”

On the same or a kindred subject, on which it appears, that the mind of our author had taken a keener interest than he dared to avow, is *The Vision*, printed by him in *The Evergreen*, with a misleading signature. This fine poem, under the
affected

affected disguise of being “ Compylit in Latin be a
“ most lernit clerk, in tyme of our hairship and
“ oppression, anno 1300, and translatit in 1524,”
is ascertained to have been composed by *Ramsay*,
about the period of the rebellion 1715. During
half a century, it imposed itself upon the public as
an ancient composition. *Lord Hailes*, and *Doctor*
Beattie, at length gave a positive opinion, that it
was not older than that epoch. The arguments
brought by the elder *Mr. Tytler* *, for assigning
it to *Allan Ramsay*, are convincing:—1. It was first
published by him, and not found in any older
collection than *The Evergreen*.—2. There were
affixed to it, in Roman letters, AR. SCOT; which
are indicative of his own name, and country.—
3. Its political sentiments coincide with his.—
4. The introduction of humorous description,
which is unsuitable to the general strain of the
composition, but consonant to *Ramsay*’s predomi-
nant talent.—5. The positive acknowledgment of
the daughter of the poet, (a lady of much discern-
ment and probity,) that this poem was of her fa-
ther’s composition. In addition to these reasons,
which already go far to decide the question, I shall
throw

* Observations on The Vision, in Transactions of the So-
ciety of Scottish Antiquarians, vol. i.

throw some other arguments into the scale :—

1. *Ramsay* was desirous of making *The Vision* pass for the composition of *Alexander Scot*, of whom we find some other poems in the *Evergreen*, particularly *A New Year's Gift to Queen Mary* : but he has unluckily been inattentive to chronology. This poem of *Scot's* is dated 1562, whereas *The Vision* is pretended to be translated in 1524 : here is an interval of near forty years, a period to which the poetical life of very few writers has been known to extend, and it is believed of none, who have left so few remains.—2. *The Vision*, though feigned to be composed so long before, is more modern in its language than the *New Year's Gift* of 1562.—3. The talents of *Alexander Scot* were not equal to that composition, as his poems bear witness.—4. In many parts of *The Vision* we observe a striking similarity of thought and expression to various passages in *Ramsay's* poems *.

The

* Sayd Fere, let nocht thy heart affray,

I come to hear thy plaint :

Thy graining and maining

Hath lately reik'd mine eir :

Debar then afar then

All eirnefs and feir.

Vision, st. 6.

Again,

The Vision has great poetical merit. The allegorical personage of the *Genius of Scotland* is drawn with

Again : Rest but a while content,
 Nocht feirful, but cheirful,
 And wait the will of fate.

Ibid. fl. 11.

Mair spear na, and feir na,
 But set thy mind at rest ;
 Aspire ay still higher ay,
 And always hope the best.

Response of the Oracle to the Poet's Wish.

I viffy't him then round about.

Vision, fl. 7.

———— please to step in,
 And viffy't round and round.

Gent. Shep. act 3. sc. 2. *prol.*

For aften far abuse the mune
 We watching beings do convene.

Vision, fl. 12.

———— He 's feeing a' that 's done
 In ilka place beneath or yont the mune.

Gent. Shep. act 3. sc. 2.

———— Or all rin richt again.

Vision, fl. 15.

———— To gar the howls row richt.

Gent. Shep. act 2. sc. 4.

Syne

with great power of imagination and characteristic propriety of attribute. The sentiments are suitable to the dignity of the theme, and the diction is highly energetic. It is a pity that the poem is not possessed

Syne byndging and whyndging,
 Qhen thus redusit to howps,
 They dander and wander
 About pure lickmadowps.

Vision, fl. 23.

He gangs about fornan frae place to place,
 As scrimpt of manners as of sence and grace;
 Oppressing a' in punishment of their sin,
 That are within his tenth degree of kin.

Gent. Shep. act 3. sc. 4.

But now it's tyme for me to draw
 My shynand sword against club-law,
 And gar my lion rore.

Vision, fl. 24.

But now again the lion rares,
 And joy spreads o'er the plain.

Gent. Shep. act 3. sc. 2.

— The victor proudly cracks,
 He has blawn out our lamp.

Vision, fl. 8.

For without oil our lamp will
 Gae blinkan out.

Edinburgh's Salutation, &c.

possessed of uniform excellence. In the description of the carousal of the gods, the author has indulged his talent for the ludicrous, at the expence of his propriety.

A few of the poems of *Ramsay* are written, as we have before remarked, in what may properly be termed English verse. It is in these attempts, which are generally of a graver species of composition than is suitable to his genius, that our Scottish poet chiefly fails. He is evidently not at his ease. He is in a dress of ceremony; and, from want of use, he feels it sit awkwardly upon him. He is constantly falling back into his accustomed habits. He mistakes the quantities, and sometimes the proper sense of English words; as we may see in his *Content*, and in his poem on *Friendship*. When he clothes the same sentiment in Scottish and in English phraseology, its inferiority in the latter dress is most remarkably conspicuous. Thus, in the beautiful dialogue between *Peggy* and *Jenny* in the *Gentle Shepherd*, the latter paints, with genuine humour, the distresses incident to a married life:

O 'tis a pleasant thing to be a bride—
Syne whinging gets about your ingle side,
Yelping for this or that wi' fasheous din;
To make them brats then ye man toil and spin:

Ae wean fa's sick, ane scads itfell wi' brue,
Ane breaks his shin, anither tines his shoe ;
The de'il gangs o'er Jock Webster, hame grows hell,
And Pate miscaws you war than tongue can tell.

In the poem intitl'd *Content*, we find the same sentiment in *English* ; but how poor, how mean, in comparison is the expression !

The pregnant matron's grief as much prevails ;
Some of the children always something ails ;
One boy is sick, t' other has broke his head ;
And nurse is blam'd when little miss is dead.

Yet, from this censure of his pieces in English verse, we must except the poem intitl'd *Health*, which is a composition of superior merit. Its form is that of satire ; and its purpose is to inculcate the attainment, and preservation, of the inestimable blessing of health, by the delineation of a series of characters, in which the effects of sloth, effeminacy, gluttony, ebriety, and every species of debauchery, are contrasted with those of activity, temperance, and sobriety. The effects of the passions, on the bodily temperature, are likewise judiciously estimated ; the pœvish, the envious, and the malignant characters, are oppos'd to the cheerful, the contented, and the benevolent ; and the preservation of a just equilibrium of mind, and benignity of heart, is shewn to be eminently promotive of the

vigour of the animal frame. The characters are drawn with a bold spirit, and a powerful hand; while the satire has all the keenness of the *Juvenalian* school.

Of *lyric poetry*, one of the most difficult species is *the song*. It is one of those mental exertions, that require not so much a superiority either of genius, or of poetic fancy, as a certain native address: so, in the intercourse of life, there is an elegance of manner, which pleases, independently, either of worth or ability. Some of the best songs in the English language were written by contemporaries and countrymen of Ramsay; by *Crawford*, *Hamilton of Bangour*, and *Lord Binning*: for we have nothing more perfect, in that species of composition, than *Tweedside*, "*What beauties does Flora disclose*;"—"Go, plaintive sounds;"—and, "*Did ever swain a nymph adore*."—The elegant author of *Essays on Song-writing* has arranged his collection under three different classes—ballad and pastoral—passionate and descriptive—ingenious and witty. As the talents of *Ramsay* were conspicuous, in all of these departments, it might be presumed that he should particularly excel, in song composition: and in reality he has displayed, in that species of writing, a high portion of merit; though perhaps not reaching that degree of eminence, at
which

which other writers, who are in other respects of inferior talents, have arrived. This appears to have arisen from his haste, rather than his incapacity to give his compositions that perfect polish, which seems to be particularly requisite in a song. *Phillips* * has observed justly, that “ a song loses
 “ all its lustre, if it be not polished with the
 “ greatest accuracy. The smallest blemish in it,
 “ like a flaw in a jewel, takes off the whole value
 “ of it. A song is as it were a little image in
 “ enamel, that requires all the nice touches of the
 “ pencil, a gloss and a smoothness, with those de-
 “ licate finishing strokes, which would be super-
 “ fluous and thrown away upon larger figures,
 “ where the strength and boldness of a masterly
 “ hand gives all the grace.” This delicate finish-
 ing *Ramsay*’s hasty pencil could not always be-
 stow: yet, as the beauty and propriety of senti-
 ment are still more material than the elegance of the
 dress,

Scribendi recte, sapere principium,—

we find many of his songs, wherein there is every thing to praise in the thought, and fortunately very little in the expression, that diminishes its power of pleasing.

* *Guardian*, No. 16.

pleasing. An excellent judge* has declared his opinion, that “ *The Lass of Patie’s Mill—The Yellow-hair’d Laddie—Farewell to Lochaber—* and *some others*, must be allowed to be equal to any, and superior, in point of pastoral simplicity, to most lyric productions, either in the Scottish, or any other language.” Among those *others*, I would mention, *The last Time I came o’er the Moor—Bessy Bell and Mary Gray—Now wat ye wha I met yestreen—Through the Wood Laddie—The Highland Laddie—My Patie is a Lover gay*. His ballad on *Bonny Kate*, (Lady Catharine Cochran,) which is written in the stanza of Shenstone, has uncommon vigour and hilarity, propriety and polish. Such then are the lyric merits, which, notwithstanding their attendant imperfections, must for ever give Ramsay a very high place among the writers of Scottish and English song.

In the year 1725, *Ramsay* published his pastoral comedy of *The Gentle Shepherd*, the noblest and most permanent monument of his fame. A few years before, he had published, in a single sheet, *A Pastoral Dialogue between Patie and Roger*, which was re-

printed

* *Mr. Ritson*, who, besides other ingenious works, has favoured the public with two admirable collections of English, and of Scottish, songs and melodies.

printed in the first collection of his poems, in 1721. This composition being much admired, his literary friends urged him to extend his plan to a regular drama: and to this fortunate suggestion the literary world is indebted for one of the most perfect pastoral poems that has ever appeared *.

The *pastoral drama* is an invention of the moderns. The first who attempted this species of poetry was *Agostino de Beccari*, in his *Sacrificio Favola Pastorale*, printed in 1553. *Tasso* is supposed to have taken the hint from him; and is allowed, in his *Aminta*, published in 1573, to have far surpassed his master. *Guarini* followed, whose *Pastor Fido* contends for the palm with the *Aminta*, and, in the general opinion of the Italians, is judged to have obtained it. *Tasso* himself is said to have confessed the superior merit of his rival's work; but to have added, in his own defence, that had *Guarini* never seen his *Aminta*, he never would have

* In the quarto of 1728, the following note is subjoined to the first scene of the Gentle Shepherd:—"This first scene is the only piece in this volume that was printed in the first: having carried the pastoral the length of five acts, at the desire of some persons of distinction, I was obliged to print this preluding scene with the rest."

have surpassed it. Yet, I think, there is little doubt, that this preference is ill-founded. Both these compositions have resplendent beauties, with glaring defects and improprieties. I am, however, much mistaken, if the latter are not more abundant in the *Pastor Fido*, as the former are predominant in the *Aminta*. Both will ever be admired, for beauty of poetical expression, for rich imagery, and for detached sentiments of equal delicacy and tenderness: but the fable, both of the *Aminta*, and *Pastor Fido*, errs against all probability; and the general language and sentiments of the characters are utterly remote from nature. The fable of the *Aminta* is not dramatic; for it is such, that the principal incidents, on which the plot turns, are incapable of representation: the beautiful *Silvia*, stripped naked, and bound by her hair to a tree by a brutal satyr, and released by her lover *Amyntas*;—her flight from the wolves;—the precipitation of *Amyntas* from a high rock, who narrowly escapes being dashed in pieces, by having his fall broken by the stump of a tree;—are all incidents, incapable of being represented to the eye; and must therefore be thrown into narration. The whole of the last act is narrative, and is taken up entirely with the history of *Amyntas*'s fall, and the happy change produced in the heart of the rigorous *Silvia*, when she found her lover thus miraculously preserved from

from the cruel death, to which her barbarity had prompted him to expose himself.

Yet, the fable of the *Aminta*, unnatural and undramatic, as it is, has the merit of simplicity. That of the *Pastor Fido*, equally unnatural and incredible, has the additional demerit of being complicated as well as absurd. The distress of *Amyntas*, arising from an adequate and natural cause—rejected love, excites our sympathy; but the distress in the *Pastor Fido* is altogether chimerical; we have no sympathy with the calamities arising from the indignation of *Diana*, or the supposed necessity of accomplishing the absurd and whimsical response of an *oracle*. We cannot be affected by the passions of fictitious beings. The love of a *satyr* has nothing in it but what is odious and disgusting.

The defects of these celebrated poems have arisen from the erroneous idea entertained by their authors, that the province of this species of poetry was not to imitate nature, but to paint that chimerical state of society, which is termed the *golden age*. Mr. Addison, who, in the *Guardian*, has treated the subject of pastoral poetry at considerable length, has drawn his critical rules from that absurd principle; for he lays it down as a maxim,

that, to form a right judgment of pastoral poetry, it is necessary to cast back our eyes on the first ages of the world, and inquire into the manners of men, “ before they were formed into large societies, “ cities built, or commerce established : a state,” says he, “ of ease, innocence, and contentment ; “ where plenty begot pleasure, and pleasure begot “ singing, and singing begot poetry, and poetry “ begot singing again :” a description this, which is so fantastical, as would almost persuade us, that the writer meant to ridicule his own doctrine, if the general strain of his criticism did not convince us it was seriously delivered. Is it necessary to prove, that this notion of pastoral poetry, however founded, in the practice of celebrated writers, has no foundation in fact, no basis in reason, nor conformity to good sense ? To a just taste, and unadulterated feelings, the natural beauties of the country, the simple manners, rustic occupations, and rural enjoyments of its inhabitants, brought into view by the medium of a well-contrived dramatic fable, must afford a much higher degree of pleasure, than any chimerical fiction, in which Arcadian nymphs and swains hold intercourse with Pan and his attendant fauns and satyrs. If the position be disputed, let the *Gentle Shepherd* be fairly compared with the *Aminta*, and, *Pastor Fido*.

The *story* of the *Gentle Shepherd* is fitted to excite the warmest interest, because the situations, into which the characters are thrown, are strongly affecting, whilst they are strictly consonant to nature and probability. The whole of the *fable* is authorized by the circumstances of the times, in which the action of the piece is laid. The æra of *Cromwel's* usurpation, when many a loyal subject, sharing the misfortunes of his exiled sovereign, were stripped of their estates, and then left to the neglect and desolation of forfeiture; the necessity under which those unhappy sufferers often lay, of leaving their infant progeny under the charge of some humble but attached dependant, till better days should dawn upon their fortunes; the criminal advantages taken by false friends in usurping the rights of the sufferers, and securing themselves against future question by deeds of guilt; these circumstances, too well founded in truth, and nature, are sufficient to account for every particular in this most interesting drama, and give it perfect verisimilitude.

The *fables* of the *Aminta* and *Pastor Fido*, drawn from a state of society which never had an existence, are, for that reason, incapable of exciting any high degree of interest; and the mind cannot for a moment remain under the influence of that deception, which it is the great purpose of the drama to produce.

The

The *characters* or *persons* of the Italian pastorals are coy nymphs and swains, whose sole occupation is hunting wild beasts, brutal satyrs who plot against the chastity of those nymphs, shepherds deriving their origin from the gods, stupid priests of these gods who are the dupes of their ambiguous will, and gods themselves disguised like shepherds, and influencing the conduct and issue of the piece. The manners of these unnatural and fictitious beings are proper to their ideal character. A dull moralizing chorus is found necessary to explain what the characters themselves must have left untold, or unintelligible.

The *persons* of the Scottish pastoral are the actual inhabitants of the country where the scene is laid ; their manners are drawn from nature with a faithful pencil. The contrast of the different characters is happily imagined, and supported with consummate skill. *Patie*, of a cheerful and sanguine temperament ; spirited, yet free from vain ambition ; contented with his humble lot ; endowed by nature with a superior understanding, and feeling in himself those internal sources of satisfaction, which are independent of the adventitious circumstances of rank and fortune. *Roger*, of a grave and phlegmatic constitution ; of kind affections, but of that ordinary turn of mind, which is apt to suppose some necessary connection between the possession of
wealth

wealth and felicity. The former, from native dignity of character, assuming a bold pre-eminence, and acting the part of a tutor and counsellor to his friend, who bends, though with some reluctance, to the authority of a nobler mind. The principal female characters are contrasted with similar skill, and equal power of discrimination. *Peggy*, beautiful in person as in mind, endowed with every quality that can adorn the character of woman; gentle, tender-hearted, constant in affection, free from vanity as from caprice; of excellent understanding; judging of others by the criterion of her own innocent mind, and therefore forming the most amiable views of human nature. *Jenny*, sensible and affectionate, sprightly and satirical; possessing the ordinary qualities of her sex, self-love, simulation, and the passion of conquest; and pleased with exercising a capricious dominion over the mind of a lover; judging of mankind rather from the cold maxims of instilled prudential caution, than from the native suggestions of the heart. —A contrast of characters strongly and skilfully opposed, and therefore each most admirably fitted to bring the other into full display.

The subordinate persons of the drama are drawn with equal skill and fidelity to their prototypes. *Glaud* and *Symon* are the genuine pictures of the
old

old Scottish yeomanry, the Lothian farmers of the last age, in their manners, sentiments, and modes of life; humble, but respectable; homely, yet comfortable. The episode of *Bauldy*, while it gives a pleasing variety, without interrupting the principal action, serves to introduce a character of a different species, as a foil to the honest and simple worth of the former. It paints in strong colours, and exposes to merited reprobation and contempt, that low and sordid mind, which seeks alone the gratification of its own desires, though purchased by the misery of the object of its affection. Bauldy congratulates himself on the cruel disappointment of Peggy's love;—" *I hope we'll a' sleep sound, but* "*ane, this night;*"—and judges her present situation of deep distress to be the most favourable moment for preferring his own suit. His punishment, as it is suitable to his demerits, gives entire satisfaction.

The *Aminta*, and *Pastor Fido*, abound in beautiful sentiments, and passages of the most tender and natural simplicity; but it is seldom we find a single page, in which this pleasing impression is not effaced by some affected and forced conceit. Nothing can be more delicately beautiful, or more agreeable to the true simplicity of pastoral, than
Amyntas's

Amyntas's recounting to *Tircis* the rise of his passion for *Silvia* :

AMINTA.

Essendo io fanciulletto, sicche appena
 Giunger potea con la man pargoletta,
 A corre i frutti da i piegati rami
 De gli arboscelli, intrinfeco divenni
 De la pui vaga e cara verginella,
 Che mai spiegasse al vento chioma d'oro —
 Congiunti eran gli alberghi,
 Ma piu congiunti i cori :
 Seco tendeva infidie con le reti
 Ai pesci ed a gli augelli, &c.

The description of their joint occupations and sports, till love insensibly arose in the breast of *Tircis* ; the natural and innocent device he employed to obtain a kiss from *Silvia* ; the discovery of his affection, and his despair on finding her heart insensible to his passion, are proofs that *Tasso* was a true poet, and knew to touch those strings, with which our genuine feelings must ever harmonize. In elegant and just description he is equally to be admired. The scene in which *Tircis* describes the lovely *Silvia* bound naked to a tree by a brutal satyr, and released by *Amyntas*, whose passion she treated with scorn, is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetic painting :

————— egli rivolse
 I cupidi occhi in quelle membra belle

Che

Che come fuole tremolare il latte
 Ne' giunche *, fi parean morbide e bianche.

But, when *Amyntas*, unloosing his disdainful mistress, addresses himself to the tree, to which she was tied ; when he declares its rugged trunk to be unworthy of the bonds of that beautiful hair, which encircled it, and reproaches its cruelty in tearing and disfiguring those charming tresses, we laugh at such despicable conceits, and lament that vicious taste, to which even a true poet found himself (we presume against his better judgment) so often compelled to sacrifice. So likewise when, forgetting nature, he resorts to the ordinary cant of pastoral, the language and thoughts of *Theocritus* and *Virgil*, and even superadds to those common-places, the false refinement, which in his age delighted his countrymen, we turn with dissatisfaction from his page. If we compare him, where the similarity of the subject allows a comparison, with the Scottish poet, how poor does the Italian appear in the competition !

Thus

* To understand this beautiful figure, it is necessary to know, that the Italian peasants carry the curdled milk to market in baskets closely woven of green rushes : hence a country treat is called *giuncata* ; and hence the English *junket*.

Thus, let the first scene of the *Aminta*, between *Silvia* and *Dafne*, be compared with the scene between *Jenny* and *Peggy*, in the *Gentle Shepherd*. The subject of both is the preference between a single and a married life :

DAFNE.

Onde nasce il tuo odio ?

SILVIA.

Dal suo amore.

DAFNE.

Piacevol padre di figlio crudele.
Ma quando mai da' mansueti agnelli
Nacquer le tigri ? O da i bei cigni i corvi ?
O me inganni, O te stessa.

SILVIA.

Odio il suo amore,
Ch' odia la mia onestade—

DAFNE.

Hor rispondimi almen, s' altri t' amasse,
Gradiresti il suo amore in questa guisa ?

SILVIA.

In questa guisa gradirei ciascuno
Infidiator di mia verginitate,
Che tu dimandi amante, ed io nemico.

DAFNE.

DAFNE.

Stimi dunque
Il monton de l' agnella ?
De la giovenca il toro ?
Stimi dunque nemico
Il tortore a la fida tortorella ?
Stimi dunque stagione
De nemicitia e d' ira
La dolce primavera,
Ch' or allegra e ridente
Riconfiglia ad amare
Il mondo egli animali,
Egli huomini e le donne ? E non t' accorgi
Come tutte le cose
Or sono innamorate
D' un amor pien di gioia e di salute ?
Mira là quel colombo,
Con che dolce fufurro lusingando,
Bacia la sua campagna :
Odi quel usignuolo,
Che va di ramo in ramo,
Cantando, io amo, io amo : e se no'l fai,
La biscia lascia il suo veleno, e corre
Cupida al suo amatore :
Van le tigri in amore :
Ama il leon superbo : e tu fol, fiera
Piu che tutte le fere,
Albergo gli dineghi nel suo petto.
Ma che dico leoni, e tigri, e serpi,
Che pur an sentimento ? Amano ancora
Gli alberi. Veder puoi con quanto affetto
E con quanti iterati abbracciamenti
La vite s'avvicchia al suo marito ;
L' abete ama l' abete, il pino il pino,

L' orno

L' orno per l' orno, e per lo falce il falce,
E l' un per l' altro faggio arde e fospira, &c.

SILVIA.

Or fu quando i fospiri
Udiro de le piante,
Io fon contenta allor d' effere amante.

Aminta, att. 1. fc. 1.

Thus translated:

DAPHNE.

But whence can fpring thy hate?

SILVIA.

Whence? from his love.

DAPHNE.

Too cruel offspring of fo kind a fire!
When was it heard that e'er the tender lamb
Produced a tiger, or the rook a fwan?—
Sure you deceive yourfelf, or jeft with me.

SILVIA.

How can I choofe but hate his love,
Which hates my chaftity?

DAPHNE.

Now tell me, fhould another thus addrefs thee,
Would'ft thou in fuch harfh kind receive his love?

SILVIA.

In fuch harfh kind I ever would receive
The traitor who would ftal my virgin jewel:
Whom you term lover I account a foe.

DAPHNE.

Thus to the ewe the ram
Thou deem'st a foe ; or to the tender heifer,
The sturdy bull ; the turtle to its mate.
Thus the delightful spring
Seems in thy mind the season of fell hate,
And deadly enmity ; the lovely spring
That smiling prompts to universal love,
That rouses nature's flame thro' all her bounds :
Nor less in animals of every kind,
Than favour'd man. See how creation glows,
In all her works, with love's imperious flame !
Mark yonder doves that bill, and sport, and kifs :
Hear'st thou the nightingale, as on the bough
She evermore repeats, " I love, I love :"
The wily snake sheaths her envenom'd fang,
And sinuous glides her to her glossy mate :
The savage tiger feels the potent flame :
The grim majestic lion growls his love
To the resounding forest.—Wilder thou
Than nature's wildest race, spurn'st at that power
To which all nature bows.—But why of these,
Of the grim lion, or the spotted lynx,
Or wily serpent ?—these have sense and feeling.
Even trees inanimate confess the god :
See how the vine clings with a fond embrace ;
The mountain fir, the pine, the elm, the beech,
Have each their favour'd mate: they burn, they sigh, &c.

SILVIA.

Well, when my ear shall hear their sighs of love,
Perhaps I too may learn to love like them.

By

By a similar strain of argument, *Linco*, in the *Pastor Fido*, endeavours to persuade *Silvio* to love, whose sole delight is in the chase, and who tells his adviser, that he would not give one wild beast, taken by his dog *Melampo*, for a thousand beautiful nymphs. *Linco* bids him “ See how all nature loves, the heavens, the earth, the sea ; and that beautiful morning star that now shines so bright, she likewise loves, and shines more splendid from her amorous flame : see how she blushes, for now perhaps she has just left the stolen embraces of her lover. The woods, and all their savage inhabitants, the seas, the dolphins, the huge whales, &c. &c.”

How poor is all this refinement and conceit, when compared with the language of truth and nature ! When *Peggy*, in the confidence of a warm and innocent heart, describes to her companion the delights of a mutual passion, the enjoyments of domestic bliss, and the happiness arising from the exercise of the parental duties and affections ; contrasting these with the cold and selfish feelings of determined celibacy, it is nature that speaks in every line, and the heart yields its warmest sympathy, as the judgment its complete conviction :

PEGGY.

Sic coarfe-spun thoughts as thae want pith to move
 My fettled mind ; I 'm o'er far gane in love.
 Patie to me is dearer than my breath,
 But want of him I dread nae other skaith.
 There 's nane of a' the herds that tread the green
 Has sic a smile, or sic twa glancing een.
 And then he speaks wi' sic a taking art,
 His words they thrill like music thro' my heart ;
 How blythly can he sport, and gently rave,
 And jest at feckless fears that fright the lave.
 Ilk day that he 's alane upon the hill,
 He reads fell books that teach him meikle skill :
 He is—but what need I say that or this,
 I'd spend a month to tell you what he is !

To the farcaetical picture which Jenny draws of the
 anxieties and turmoil of a wedded life, Peggy thus
 warmly replies :

Yes, it 's a heartsome thing to be a wife,
 When round the ingle-edge young sprouts are rife.
 Gif I 'm fae happy, I shall hae delight
 To hear their little plaints, and keep them right.
 Wow, Jenny ! can there greater pleasure be,
 Than see sic wee tots toolying at your knee ;
 When a' they ettle at, their greatest wish,
 Is to be made of, and obtain a kifs ?
 Can there be toil in tenting day and night
 The like of them, when love makes care delight * ?

JENNY.

* When the sentiments are drawn from nature, it is not surprising that, where the subject is similar, there should be a concurrence

JENNY.

But poortith, Peggy, is the warft of a',
 Gif o'er your heads ill-chance should beggary draw :
 Your nowt may die ; the spate may bear away
 Frae aff the howms your dainty rucks of hay ;
 The thick blawn wreaths of snaw, or blashy thows,
 May smoor your wethers, and may rot your ewes, &c.

PEGGY.

May sic ill luck befa' that filly she
 Wha has sic fears, for that was never me.
 Let folk bode weel, and strive to do their best,
 Nae mair 's requir'd ; let heaven make out the rest.
 I 've heard my honest uncle aften say,
 That lads should a' for wives that 's virtuous pray ;
 For the maist thrifty man could never get
 A weel-ftor'd room, unless his wife wad let :
 Wherefore nocht shall be wanting on my part,
 To gather wealth to raife my shepherd's heart :

Whate'er

currence of thought between two genuine poets, who never saw each other's works. How similar is the following passage of the 10th satire of Boileau to the imagery of this beautiful family picture !

Quelle joie en effet, quelle douceur extreme
 De se voir carresser d' une epouse qu'on aime ;—
 De voir autour de soi croître dans la maison,
 Sous les paisibles loix d' une agréable mere
 De petits citoyens dont on croit être pere !
 Quel charme au moindre mal qui nous vient menacer
 De la voir aussitôt accourir, s' empresser, &c.

Whate'er he wins I'll guide wi' canny care,
 And win the vogue at market, tron, or fair,
 For halefome, clean, cheap, and sufficient ware.
 A flock of lambs, cheefe, butter, and some woo',
 Shall first be sald to pay the laird his due ;
 Syne a' behind 's our ain.—Thus, without fear,
 Wi' love and rowth we thro' the world will steer :
 And when my Pate in bairns and gear grows rife,
 He'll blefs the day he gat me for his wife.

JENNY.

But what if some young giglet on the green,
 Wi' dimpled cheeks, and twa bewitching een,
 Should gar your Patie think his half-worn Meg,
 And her ken'd kisses, hardly worth a feg ?

PEGGY.

Nae mair of that :—dear Jenny, to be free,
 There 's some men constanter in love than we ;
 Nor is the ferly great, when nature kind
 Has blest them with solidity of mind :
 They 'll reason calmly, and with kindness smile,
 When our short passions wad our peace beguile :
 Sae whenfoe'er they slight their maiks at hame,
 'Tis ten to ane the wives are maist to blame.
 Then I 'll employ wi' pleasure a' my art,
 To keep him cheerfu', and secure his heart :
 At een, when he comes weary frae the hill,
 I 'll hae a' things made ready to his will :
 In winter, when he toils thro' wind and rain,
 A bleezing ingle, and a clean hearth-stane ;
 And soon as he flings by his plaid and staff,
 The seething pat 's be ready to tak' aff

Clean hag-a-bag I 'll spread upon his board,
 And serve him wi' the best we can afford :
 Good-humour and white bigonets shall be
 Guards to my face, to keep his love for me.

Act. 1. sc. 2.

Such are the sentiments of nature ; nor is the language, in which they are conveyed, inadequate to their force and tenderness : for to those who understand the Scottish dialect, the expression will be found to be as beautiful as the thought. It is in those touches of simple nature, those artless descriptions, of which the heart instantly feels the force, thus confessing their consonance to truth, that Ramsay excels all the pastoral poets that ever wrote.

Thus *Patie* to *Peggy*, assuring her of the constancy of his affection :

I 'm sure I canna change :—ye need na fear ;
 Tho' we 're but young, I 've loo'd you mony a year :
 I mind it weel, whan thou could'st hardly gang,
 Or lisp out words, I choos'd you frae the thrang
 Of a' the bairns, and led thee by the hand
 Aft to the tanfy-know, or rashy strand,
 Thou smiling by my side :—I took delight
 To pou the rashes green wi' roots sae white,
 Of which, as well as my young fancy could,
 For thee I plet the flow'ry belt and snood.

Act. 2. sc. 4.

Let this be contrasted with its corresponding sentiment in the *Pastor Fido*, when *Mirtillo* thus pleads the constancy of his affection for *Amaryllis* :

Prima che mai cangiar voglia, O pensiere,
 Cangerò vita in morte :
 Però che la bellissima Amarylli,
 Così com' è crudel, com' è spietata,
 E sola e la vita mia,
 Ne può già sostener corporea salma,
 Più d' un cor, più d' un alma.

*Sooner than change my mind, my darling thought,
 Oh may my life be changed into death !*

(and mark the pledge of this assurance)

For cruel tho', tho' merciless she be,
 Yet my whole life is wrapt in Amaryllis ;
 Nor can the human frame, I think, contain
 A double heart at once, a double soul !

Past. Fid. act. 3. sc. 6.

The charm of the *Gentle Shepherd* arises equally from the nature of the passions, which are there delineated, and the engaging simplicity and truth, with which their effects are described. The poet paints an honourable and virtuous affection between a youthful pair of the most amiable character ; a passion indulged on each side from the purest and most disinterested motives, surmounting the severest of all trials—the unexpected elevation of the lover to a rank which, according to the
 maxims

maxims of the world, would preclude the possibility of union ; and crowned at length by the delightful and most unlooked for discovery, that this union is not only equal as to the condition of the parties, but is an act of retributive justice. In the anxious suspense, that precedes this discovery, the conflict of generous passions in the breasts of the two lovers is drawn with consummate art, and gives rise to a scene of the utmost tenderness, and the most pathetic interest. Cold indeed must be that heart, and dead to the finest sensibilities of our nature, which can read without emotion the interview between *Patie* and *Peggy*, after the discovery of *Patie's* elevated birth, which the following lines describe :

PATIE.

———— My *Peggy*, why in tears ?

Smile as ye wont, allow nae room for fears :

Tho' I 'm nae mair a shepherd, yet I 'm thine.

PEGGY.

I dare not think fae high.—I now repine
At the unhappy chance that made not me
A gentle match, or still a herd kept thee.
Wha can withoutten pain see frae the coast
The ship that bears his all like to be lost ;
Like to be carried, by some rever's hand,
Far frae his wishes to some distant land ?

PATIE.

PATIE.

Ne'er quarrel fate, whilst it wi' me remains
 To raise thee up, or still attend these plains.
 My father has forbid our loves, I own ;
 But love 's superior to a parent's frown :
 I falsehood hate : — come, kifs thy cares away ;
 I ken to love, as weel as to obey.
 Sir William 's generous ; leave the task to me,
 To make strict duty, and true love agree.

PEGGY.

Speak on, speak ever thus, and still my grief ;
 But short I dare to hope the fond relief.
 New thoughts a gentler face will soon inspire,
 That wi' nice air swims round in silk attire ;
 Then I, poor me ! wi' sighs may ban my fate,
 When the young laird 's nae mair my heartsome Pate.
 Nae mair again to hear sweet tales express
 By the blyth shepherd that excell'd the rest ;
 Nae mair be envied by the tattling gang,
 When Patie kifs'd me, when I danc'd or sang ;
 Nae mair, alake ! we 'll on the meadow play,
 And rin half breathless round the rucks of hay,
 As aft-times I hae fled from thee right fain,
 And fawn on purpose that I might be ta'en :
 Nae mair around the foggy know I 'll creep,
 To watch and gaze upon thee while asleep.—
 But hear my vow—'t will help to gi'e me ease—
 May sudden death, or deadly fair disease,
 And warst of ills, attend my wretched life,
 If e'er to ane but thee I be a wife !——

PATIE.

PATIE.

Sure heaven approves :—and be assur'd of me,
 I'll ne'er gang back of what I've sworn to thee ;
 And time, tho' time man interpose awhile,
 And I man leave my Peggy and this isle,
 Yet time, nor distance, nor the fairest face,
 (If there's a fairer,) e'er shall fill thy place.
 I'd hate my fortune, &c.——

With similar fervent assurances of the constancy of his affection, *Patie* prevails in calming the agitation of *Peggy's* mind, and banishing her fears. She declares she will patiently await the happy period of his return, soothing the long interval with prayers for his welfare, and sedulous endeavours to improve and accomplish her mind, that she may be the more worthy of his affection. The scene concludes with an effusion of her heart in a sentiment of inimitable tenderness and beauty :

With every setting day and rising morn,
 I'll kneel to heaven and ask thy safe return ;
 Under that tree, and on the suckler brae,
 Where aft we wont, when bairns, to rin and play ;
 And to the hize-shaw, where first ye vow'd
 Ye wad be mine, and I as eithly trow'd,
 I'll aften gang, and tell the trees and flow'rs,
 Wi' joy, that they'll bear witness I am yours.

Act 4. sc. 2.

To a passion at once so pure, so delicate, so fervent, and so disinterested in its object, with what propriety

propriety may we apply that beautiful apostrophe of *Burns*, in his *Cottar's Saturday Night* !

O happy love ! where love like this is found ;
 O heartfelt raptures ! blifs beyond compare !
 If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening
 gale.

In intimate knowledge of human nature Ramfay yields to few poets either of ancient or of modern times. How naturally does poor Roger conjecture the insensibility of his mistress to his passion, from the following simple, but finely-imagined circumstances :

My Bawty is a cur I dearly like ;
 Even while he fawn'd she strak the poor dumb tyke :
 If I had fill'd a nook within her breast,
 She wad have shawn mair kindness to my beast.
 When I begin to tune my stock and horn,
 Wi' a' her face she shaws a cauldrie scorn :
 Last night I play'd, ye never heard sic spite ;
 O'er *Bogie* was the tune, and her delight ;
 Yet tauntingly she at her cousin speer'd,
 Gif she could tell what tune I play'd, and sneer'd.

Æt 1. *sc.* 1.

The

The counfel, which *Patie* gives his friend, to prove with certainty the ftate of *Jenny's* affections, is the refult of a profound acquaintance with the human heart :

Daft gowk ! leave aff that filly whinging way ;
Seem carelefs ; there 's my hand ye 'll win the day.
Hear how I ferv'd my lafs, I love as weel
As ye do Jenny, and wi' heart as leal

Then follows a picture fo natural, and at the fame time fo exquisitely beautiful, that there is nothing in antiquity that can parallel it :

Laft morning I was gay, and early out ;
Upon a dyke I lean'd, glow'ring about ;
I faw my Meg come linkan o'er the lee ;
I faw my Meg, but Meggy faw na me ;
For yet the fun was wading thro the mift,
And fhe was clofe upon me ere fhe wift.
Hir coats were kiltit, and did fweetly fhaw
Her ftraight bare legs that whiter were than fnaw ;
Her cockernony fnooded up fu' fleek, '
Her haffet locks hang waving on her cheek ;
Her cheeks fae ruddy, and her een fae clear,
And oh ! her mouth like ony hunny pear :
Neat, neat fhe was in buftine waiftcoat clean,
As fhe came fkiſſing o'er the dewy green.
Blythfome I cry'd, " My bonny Meg, come here,
" I ferly wherefore ye 're fae foon after !
" But I can guefs, ye 're gawn to gather dew :"
She fcowr'd awa, and faid, " What 's that to you ?"

" Then

“ Then fare ye weel, Meg dorts, and e’en ’s ye like,”
 I carelefs cry’d, and lap in o’er the dyke.
 I trow when that she faw, within a crack,
 She came wi’ a right thievelefs errand back ;
 Mifca’d me firft ; then bade me hound my dog,
 To wear up three waff ewes ftray’d on the bog.
 I leugh, and fae did fhe ; then wi’ great hafte
 I clasp’d my arms about her neck and waift ;
 About her yielding waift, and took a fowth
 Of sweeteft kifles frae her glowing mouth :
 While hard and faft I held her in my grips,
 My very faul came lowping to my lips.
 Sair, fair fhe flet wi’ me ’tween ilka smack,
 But weel I kend fhe meant na as fhe fpake.
 Dear Roger, when your jo puts on her gloom,
 Do ye fae too, and never fafh your thumb ;
 Seem to forfake her, foon fhe ’ll change her mood ;
 Gae woo anither, and fhe ’ll gang clean wood.

Act 1. fc. 1.

If, at times, we difcern in the *Aminta* the proofs
 of a knowledge of the human heart, and the fimple
 and genuine language of nature, our emotions of
 pleafure are foon checked by fome frivolous ftroke
 of refinement, or fome cold conceit. In the *Pastor
Fido*, the latter impreffion is entirely predominant,
 and we are feldom gratified with any thing like a
 natural or fimple fentiment. The character of
Silvio, utterly infenfible to the charms of beauty or
 of female excellence, and who repays an ardent
 paffion with infolence and hatred, if it exifts at all
in

in nature, is fitted only to excite contempt and detestation. *Dorinda's* courtship of *Silvio* is equally nauseous, and the stratagem she employs to gain his love is alike unnatural. She steals and hides his favourite dog *Melampo*, and then throwing herself in his way while he is whooping after him through the forest, tells him she has found both the dog and a wounded doe, and claims her reward for the discovery. "What shall that be?" says *Silvio*.—"Only," replies the nymph, "one of those things that your mother so often gives you."—"What," says he, "a box o' the ear?"—"Nay, nay, but," says *Dorinda*, "does she never give thee a kifs?"—"She neither kiffes me, nor wants that others should kifs me."—

SILVIO.

Parla se vuoi
Effer intesa.

DORINDA.

O misera! un di quelli,
Che ti da la tua madre.

SILVIO.

Una guanciata?

DORINDA.

Una guanciata a chi t'adora, Silvio?

SILVIO.

SILVIO.

Ma carreggia con queste ella sovente
Mi fuole.

DORINDA.

Ah so ben io che non è vero ;
Etal' hor non ti bacia ?

SILVIO.

Nè mi bacia,
Ne vuol ch' altri mi baci.

The dog is produced, and *Silvio* asks, “ Where is “ the doe ? ” — “ That poor doe,” says she, “ am I.” A petulance which, though rudely, we cannot say is unjustly punished, by *Silvio* giving a thousand kisses to his dear dog, and leaving the forward nymph, with a flat assurance of his hatred, to ruminate on his scorn, and her own indelicacy. If this is nature, it is at least not *la belle nature*.

But the circumstance, on which turns the conversion of the obdurate *Silvio*, bids defiance even to possibility. Hunting in the forest, he holds a long discourse with an echo, and is half persuaded, by the reflected sounds of his own voice, that there is some real pleasure in love, and that he himself must one day yield to its influence. *Dorinda* clothes herself in the skin of a wolf, and is shot by him with an arrow, mistaking her for that animal.

animal. Then all at once he becomes her most passionate lover, sucks out the barb of the arrow with a plaister of green herbs, and swears to marry her on her recovery, which, by the favour of the gods, is fortunately accomplished in an instant.

Equally unnatural with the fable are the sentiments of this pastoral. *Amaryllis*, passionately adored by *Mirtillo*, and secretly loving him, employs a long and refined metaphysical argument to persuade him, that if he really loves her, he ought to love her virtue; and that man's true glory lies in curbing his appetites. The *moral* chorus seems to have notions of love much more consonant to human nature, who discourses for a quarter of an hour on the different kinds of kisses, and the supreme pleasure felt, when they are the expression of a mutual passion. But we need no chorus to elucidate *arcana* of this nature.

True it is that in this drama, as in the *Aminta*, there are passages of such transcendant beauty, of such high poetic merit, that we cannot wonder if, to many readers, they should veil every absurdity of fable, or of the general strain of sentiment: for who is there that can read the apostrophe of *Ama-*

ryllis to the groves and woods, the eulogy of rural life—

Care felve beate, &c. ;

the charming address of *Mirtillo* to the spring—

O primavera gioventi del anno, &c. ;

or the fanciful, but inspired description of the age of gold—

O bella età de l'oro ! &c. ;

who is there that can read these passages without the highest admiration and delight ? but it must at the same time be owned, that the merit of these Italian poets lies in those highly finished, but thinly sown passages of splendor ; and not in the structure of their fables, or the consonance of their general sentiments to truth and nature.

The principal difficulty in pastoral poetry, when it attempts an actual delineation of nature, (which we have seen is too seldom its object,) lies in the association of delicate and affecting sentiments with the genuine manners of rustic life ; an union so difficult to be accomplished, that the chief pastoral poets, both ancient and modern, have either entirely abandoned the attempt, by choosing to paint a fabulous and chimerical state of society ; or have
failed

failed in their endeavour, either by indulging in such refinement of sentiment as is utterly inconsistent with rustic nature, or by endowing their characters with such a rudeness and vulgarity of manners as is hostile to every idea of delicacy. It appears to me that *Ramsay* has most happily avoided these extremes; and this he could the better do, from the singularly fortunate choice of his subject. The principal persons of the drama, though trained from infancy in the manners of rustic life, are of generous birth; to whom therefore we may allow, from nature and the influence of blood, an elevation of sentiment, and a nobler mode of thinking, than to ordinary peasants. To these characters the poet has therefore, with perfect propriety and knowledge of human nature, given the generous sentiments that accord with their condition, though veiled a little by the manners, and conveyed in the language which suits their accidental situation. The other characters, who are truly peasants, are painted with fidelity from nature; but even of these, the situation chosen by the poet was favourable for avoiding that extreme vulgarity and coarseness of manners which would have offended a good taste. The peasantry of the *Pentland hills*, within six or seven miles of the metropolis, with which of course they have frequent communication, cannot be supposed to exhibit the same rudeness of manners which distinguishes those

of the remote part of the country. As the models, therefore, from which the poet drew were cast in a finer mould than mere provincial rustics, so their copies, as drawn by him, do not offend by their vulgarity, nor is there any greater degree of rusticity than what merely distinguishes their mode of life and occupations.

In what I have said of the manners of the characters in the *Gentle Shepherd*, I know that I encounter the prejudices of some *Scottish critics*, who allowing otherwise the very high merits of Ramsay as a poet, and giving him credit in particular for his knowledge of human nature, and skill to touch the passions, quarrel with him only on the score of his language; as they seem to annex inseparably the idea of coarseness and vulgarity to every thing that is written in the native dialect of their country: but of this I have said enough before. To every Englishman, and, I trust, to every Scotsman not of fastidious refinement, the dialect of the *Gentle Shepherd* will appear to be most perfectly consonant to the characters of the speakers, and the times in which the action is laid. To this latter circumstance the critics I have just mentioned seem not to have been sufficiently attentive. The language of this pastoral is not precisely the Scottish language of the present day: the poet himself spoke the language of the beginning of the century, and his
persons

persons were of the age preceding that period. To us their dialect is an antiquated tongue, and as such it carries with it a Doric simplicity. But when we consider both the characters and the times, it has an indispensable propriety; and to have given the speakers in the *Gentle Shepherd* a more refined and polished dialect, or more modern tone of conversation, would have been a gross violation of truth and nature.

In the faithful painting of rustic life, *Ramsay* seems to have been indebted to his own situation and early habits, as well as to the want of a learned education. He was familiarly acquainted with rural nature from actual observation; and his own impressions were not weakened or altered by much acquaintance with the classical common-places, or with those artificial pictures which are presented by the poets *. It is not therefore the general characters

* So little has *Ramsay* borrowed from the ordinary language of pastoral, which is generally a tame imitation of the dialogue of Virgil and Theocritus, that in the whole of the Scottish poem there are (I think) only *three* passages that bring to mind those common-places which, in the eclogues of Pope, we find almost in every line :

The bees shall loathe the flower and quit the hive,
 The saughs on boggy ground shall cease to thrive,
 Ere scornful queans, &c.

Æt I. *sc.* I.

acters of the country, which one poet can easily draw from the works of others, that we find in his pastoral; it was the country in which he lived, the genuine manners of its inhabitants, the actual scenes with which he was conversant, that fixed his observation, and guided his imitative pencil. The character which, in the preface to his *Evergreen*, he assigns to the Scottish poetry in general, is in the most peculiar manner assignable to his own:—

“ The morning rises in the poet’s description, as
 “ she does in the Scottish horizon: we are not car-
 “ ried to Greece and Italy for a shade, a stream, or
 “ a breeze; the groves rise in our own valleys,
 “ the rivers flow from our own fountains, and the
 “ winds blow upon our own hills.” Ramsay’s
 landscapes are drawn with the most characteristic
 precision: we view the scene before us, as in the
 paintings of a *Claude* or a *Waterloo*; and the hinds
 and shepherds of the Pentland hills, to all of whom
 this delightful pastoral is as familiar as their cate-
 chism, can trace the whole of its scenery in nature,
 and are eager to point out to the inquiring stranger
 —the

I’ve seen with shining fair the morning rise,
 And soon the fleety clouds mirk a’ the skies;
 I’ve seen the silver spring a while rin clear,
 And soon in mossy puddles disappear;
 The bridegroom may rejoice, &c.

Alt 3. sc. 3.

See yon twa elms that grow up side by side,
 Suppose them some years syne bridegroom and bride, &c.

Alt 1. sc. 2.

—the waterfall of *Habbie's how*—the cottages of *Glaud* and *Symon*—*Sir William's* * *ancient tower*, ruined in the civil wars, but since rebuilt—the *auld avenue* and *shady groves*, still remaining in defiance of the modern taste for naked, shadeless lawn. And here let it be remarked, as perhaps the surest criterion of the merit of this pastoral as a *true delineation of nature*, that it is universally relished and admired by that class of people whose habits of life and manners are there described. Its sentiments and descriptions are in unison with their feelings. It is recited, with congenial animation and delight, at the fireside of the farmer, when in the evening the lads and lasses assemble to solace themselves after the labours of the day, and share the rustic meal. There is not a milk-maid, a plough-boy, or a shepherd, of the Lowlands of Scotland, who has not by heart its favourite passages, and can rehearse its entire scenes. There are many of its couplets that, like the verses of Homer, are become proverbial, and have the force of an adage, when introduced in familiar writing, or in ordinary conversation.

I HAVE

* Sir William Purves of Woodhouselee, whose estate was forfeited by the Protector, for his adherence to the royal cause: he regained it at the restoration, and was appointed king's solicitor.

I HAVE thus endeavoured to accomplish what I proposed in the beginning of this Essay, which was, by an examination of the writings of *Ramsay*, to ascertain the character of his genius, and vindicate his title to that rank which, I conceive, it is his right to hold among our classical poets. I have shewn that his genius was original, inasmuch as he drew from nature, with a vivid imagination, and a vigorous pencil: that he inherited, in an uncommon measure, the knowledge of the human heart, the detail of life and manners; and though more prone to discern the weaknesses of mankind, the mean and the absurd in human conduct, and to apply to them the scourge of satire; yet, that he possessed the power of touching the finer passions, and was eminently skilled in the pathetic of nature. Of his power of invention, the drama of the *Gentle Shepherd*, and his *Comic Tales*, afford indisputable evidence; as does *The Vision*, of his imagination. In variety of talents he yields to few poets either of ancient or of modern times.

The writings of *Ramsay*, as of every uncultivated genius, abound with blemishes. Even the *Gentle Shepherd*, tender and affecting as it is in the general strain of its sentiments, displays some strokes of coarseness; and his smaller pieces are frequently
tarnished

tarnished with improprieties, both of thought and expression. A harsh and fastidious critic may find abundant room to gratify a splenetic disposition: and such will not fail to remark, that, in this short Review of his Writings, I have been much less solicitous to point out those imperfections of my author, than to display his beauties. I acknowledge the justness of this observation; but I take no blame to myself. On this subject I have ever been of an opinion, in which I am warranted by the best of the English critics, *Dryden* and *Addison*, that it is much easier, in all works of taste, to discover faults, which generally float upon the surface, and are therefore obvious to the meanest understanding, than to discern those beauties, which are delicate in their nature, and operate only on our finer sensibilities: and, as the task is the nicer, so is it incomparably the more pleasing.

I must at the same time observe, that, in the preceding observations, the admirers of theoretic and metaphysical criticism will find but little to gratify their prevailing propensity. In judging of the merits of poetry, and of its power to please the imagination, or to touch the passions, I cannot help thinking, that an appeal to the feelings of mankind is a more sure criterion of excellence or defect, than any process of reasoning, depending on an abstruse analysis of the powers of the mind,
or

or a theory of the passions. We may admire the ingenuity displayed in works of this nature, but we cannot make use of them to regulate our taste. In our judgment of poetry, as of all the works of genius, there is a natural and instantaneous feeling of excellence, and a disapprobation of defect or impropriety, which outruns all reasoning; and which directs with much more certainty than any conclusions of the understanding. Informed by this unerring monitor, it may be *pleasing* to find its decisions, on reflecting on the causes and nature of our feelings, approved and warranted by the judgment; but it is not *necessary*. Our opinion was formed antecedently to that reflection, and is therefore entirely independent of it. If I feel no pleasure in the perusal of a poem, I cannot be persuaded, by any subtlety of philosophical argumentation, that I ought to have been pleased: if I do feel pleasure, that argument is unnecessary. In a word, that species of abstract reasoning may amuse, and even improve the understanding; and, as fitted to do so, it is a laudable and a manly exercise of our faculties; but it cannot guide the taste. This quality of the mind is a gift of nature. It may be cultivated and improved by exercise upon its objects, but it cannot be created. We cannot acquire taste, as we do mathematics or logic, by studying it as a science. No process of reasoning
reasoning

reasoning can ever teach the nerves to thrill, the eyes to overflow, or the heart to sympathise. This sensibility is inbred in the mind : it is the *divinæ particula auræ* ; and as all true poetry addresses itself to that faculty of our nature, it must be the only sure criterion to judge of its excellence, or defects.



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V E R S E S

ADDRESSED TO

ALLAN RAMSAY,

ON HIS POEMS.

1721.

FROM J. BURCHET.

HAIL, northern bard ! thou fav'rite of the nine,
Bright or as Horace did, or Virgil, shine :
In ev'ry part of what thou 'st done we find
How they, and great Apollo too, have join'd
To furnish thee with an uncommon skill,
And with poetic fire thy bosom fill.

Thy “ Morning Interview ” throughout is
fraught

With tuneful numbers and majestic thought :

And Celia, who her lover's suit disdain'd,
Is by all-powerful gold at length obtain'd.

When winter's hoary aspect makes the plains
Unpleasant to the nymphs and jovial swains,
Sweetly thou dost thy rural couples call
To pleasures known within Edina's wall.

When, Allan, thou, for reasons thou know'st
best,
Doom'd busy Cowper to eternal rest,
What mortal could thine el'gy on him read,
And not have sworn he was defunct indeed?
Yet that he might not lose accustom'd dues,
You rous'd him from the grave to open pews;
Such magic, worthy Allan, hath thy muse.

The experienc'd bawd, in aptest strains thou'st
made
Early instruct her pupils in their trade;
Left, when their faces wrinkled are with age,
They should not cullies as when young engage.
But on our sex why art thou so severe,
To wish for pleasure we may pay so dear?
Suppose that thou had'st, after cheerful juice,
Met with a strolling harlot wond'rous spruce,
And been by her prevail'd with to resort
Where claret might be drunk, or, if not, port;
Suppose,

Suppose, I say, that this thou granted had,
And freedom took with the enticing jade,
Would'st thou not hope some artist might be
found
To cure, if aught you ail'd, the smarting wound?

When of the Caledonian garb you sing,
(Which from Tartana's distant clime you bring,)
With how much force you recommend the plaid
To ev'ry jolly swain and lovely maid!
But if, as fame reports, some of those wights
Who canton'd are among the rugged heights,
No breeks put on, should'st thou not them advise
(Excuse me, Ramsay, if I am too nice)
To take, as fitting 'tis, some speedy care
That what should hidden be appears not bare,
Left damsels, yet unknowing, should by chance
Their nimble ogle t'wards the object glance:
If this thou dost, we, who the south possess,
May teach our females how they ought to dress;
But chiefly let them understand, 'tis meet
They should their legs hide more, if not their
feet;
Too much by help of whalebone now display'd,
Ev'n from the duchess to the kitchen-maid;
But with more reason those who give distaste,
When on their uncouth limbs our eyes we cast.

Thy other sonnets in each stanza shew
What, when of love you think, thy muse can do ;
So movingly thou 'st made the am'rous swain
Wish on the moor his lass to meet again,
That I, methinks, find an unusual pain.
Nor hast thou, cheerful bard, exprest less skill,
When the brisk lass you sang of Patie's mill ;
Or Sufy, whom the lad with yellow hair
Thou 'st made, in soft and pleasing notes, prefer
To nymphs less handsome, constant, gay, and fair.

In lovely strains kind Nancy you address,
And make fond Willy his coy Jean possess ;
Which done, thou 'st blest the lad in Nelly's arms,
Who long had absent been 'midst dire alarms ;
And artfully you 've plac'd within the grove
Jamie, to hear his mistress own her love.

A gentle cure you 've found for Strephon's
 breast,
By scornful Betty long depriv'd of rest :
And when the blisful pairs you thus have crown'd,
You 'd have the glass go merrily around,
To shake off care, and render sleep more sound.

Who e'er shall see, or hath already seen,
Those bonny lines call'd " Christ's Kirk on the
 " Green,"

Must

Must own that thou hast, to thy lasting praise,
Deserv'd, as well as royal James, the bays :
'Mong other things, you 've painted to the life
A sot unactive lying by his wife,
Which oft 'twixt wedded folks makes woful strife.

When 'gainst the scribbling knaves your pen you
drew,
How didst thou lash the vile presumptuous crew !
Not much fam'd Butler, who had gone before,
E'er ridicul'd his knight or Ralpho more ;
So well thou 'st done it, equal smart they feel
As if thou 'd pierc'd their hearts with killing steel.

They thus subdu'd, you in pathetic rhyme
A subject undertook that 's more sublime ;
By noble thoughts, and words discreetly join'd,
Thou 'st taught me how I may contentment find.
And when to Addie's fame you touch the lyre,
Thou sang'st like one of the seraphic choir ;
So smoothly flow thy nat'ral rural strains,
So sweetly too you 've made the mournful swains
His death lament, what mortal can forbear
Shedding, like us, upon his tomb a tear ?

Go on, fam'd bard, thou wonder of our days,
And crown thy head with never-fading bays ;
While grateful Britons do thy lines revere,
And value, as they ought, their Virgil here.

FROM C. T.

As once I view'd a rural scene,
With summer's sweet profusely wild,
Such pleasure sooth'd my giddy sense,
I ravish'd stood, while nature smil'd.

Straight I resolv'd, and chose a field
Where all the spring I might transfer ;
There stood the trees in equal rows,
Here Flora's pride in one parterre.

The task was done, the sweets were fled,
Each plant had lost its sprightly air,
As if they grudg'd to be confin'd,
Or to their will not matched were.

The narrow scene displeas'd my mind,
Which daily still more homely grew ;
At length I fled the loathed sight,
And hied me to the fields a-new.

Here nature wanton'd in her prime ;
My fancy rang'd the boundless waste ;
Each different sight pleas'd with surprise ;
I welcom'd back the pleasures past.

Thus

Thus some who feel Apollo's rage,
Would teach their muse her drefs and time,
Till hamper'd fo with rules of art,
They fmother quite the vital flame.

They daily chime the fame dull tone,
Their muse no daring fallies grace,
But stiffly held with bit and curb,
Keeps heavy trot, tho' equal pace.

But who takes nature for his rule,
Shall by her generous bounty fhine ;
His eafy muse revels at will,
And ftrikes new wonders every line.

Keep then, my friend, your native guide,
Never diftruff her plenteous ftore,
Ne'er lefs propitious will fhe prove
Than now, but, if fhe can, ftill more.

FROM C. BECKINGHAM.

Too blindly partial to my native tongue,
Fond of the smoothness of our English song,
At first thy numbers did uncouth appear,
And shock'd th' affected niceness of the ear ;
Thro' prejudice's eye each page I see,
Tho' all were beauties, none were so to me.
Yet sham'd at last, while all thy genius own,
To have that genius hid from me alone,
Resolv'd to find for praise or censure cause,
Whether to join with all, or all oppose,
Careful I read thee o'er and o'er again ;
At length the useful search requites my pain :
My false distaste to instant pleasures turn'd,
As much I envy as before I scorn'd ;
And thus, the error of my pride to clear,
I sign my honest recantation here.

FROM JAMES ARBUCKLE.

DEAR Allan, who that hears your strains,
Can grudge that you should wear the bays,
When 'tis so long since Scotia's plains
Could boast of such melodious lays !

What tho' the critics, snarling curs !
Cry out, your Pegasus wants reins ;
Bid them provide themselves of spurs,
Such riders need not fear their brains.

A muse that 's healthy, fair and sound,
With noble ardour fearless hastes
O'er hill and dale ; but carpet-ground
Was ay for tender-footed beasts.

E'en let the fustian coxcombs chuse
Their carpet-ground ; but the green field
Was held a walk for Virgil's muse,
And Virgil was an unco' chield !

Your muse, upon her native stock
Subsisting, raises thence a name ;
While they are forc'd to pick the lock
Of other bards, and pilfer fame.

Oft when I read your joyous lines,
So full of pleasant jests and wit,
So blyth and gay the humour shines,
It gives me many a merry fit.

Then when I hear of Maggy's charms,
And Roger tholing fair disdain,
The bonny lass my bosom warms,
And mickle I bemoan the swain :

For who can hear the lad complain,
And not participate and feel
His artless undissembled pain,
Unless he has a heart of steel.

But Patie's wiles and cunning arts
Appease th' imaginary grief,
Declare him well a clown of parts,
And bring the wretched wight relief.

More might be said, but in a friend
Encomiums seem but dull and flat,
“ The wise approve, but fools commend ;”
A Pope's authority for that.

Else certes 't were in me unmeet
To grudge the muse's utmost force,
Or spare in such a cause my feet
To clinch at least in praise of yours.

FROM WILLIAM MESTON.

ALLOW me, Allan, to address thy muse,
A favour greatest kings will not refuse :
Thou who mak'st shepherds nat'rally to vent
Their grief, and with their doleful songs lament
The loss of friendly and beloved swains,
And with their names and praises fill the plains,
Till some hard-hearted mountain feel their care,
And echo back their sorrow thro' the air ;
Take up thy well-tun'd pipe, exert thy skill,
Great bard, lament our neighb'ring shepherd Hill.

Tell how he was belov'd by all the swains,
Who priz'd his friendship, and admir'd his strains.
The list'ning crowd stood silent in a ring,
Watching with greedy ears to hear him sing ;
His charming and instructive notes admir'd,
For Hill by great Apollo was inspir'd ;
So bright his thoughts, so nervous, and so just,
And well express'd, they pleas'd the nicest gust ;
His jolly muse e'en torment could disdain,
Conjure the gout, and sport with racking pain.

Pregnant with nature's gifts, he could impart
Good sense, without the midwifery of art ;

For

For what is art, with all her rigid rules,
But nature brush'd and furbish'd up in schools,
Whose works we value and admire the more,
The nearer they approach to nature's shore?
How mean are all the faint essays of art,
When nature fails to act her proper part!

Pull up the sluice of some long-gather'd dam,
Whose waters from much diff'ring fountains came,
The noisy torrent runs with force and haste,
Grating the ear, and nauseous to the taste,
O'erflows the banks, and, where it is gainstood,
Cuts out new channels with its swelling flood;
But mark, you 'll find the noisy thing decay,
Sink low right soon, then languish and run dry.

When crystal streams, with their own fountains
fed,
With easy winding in their channels led,
Water the flow'rs which on their margins grow,
Drink in their sweets, and equally still flow,
In these the shepherds and the panting swains
Can quench their thirst, and bathe to ease their pains:
'Their murm'ring streams and colour bring delight
To list'ning ears, and gratify the sight.

Such are thy strains, great bard, and such were
Hill's;
Thine flow in fuller streams, his ran in rills.

TO THE CRITIC.

STAND, Critic, and, before ye read,
 Say, are ye free of party fead?
 Or of a faul fae scrimp and rude,
 To envy every thing that 's good?
 And if I shou'd, perhaps, by chance,
 Something that 's new and smart advance,
 Resolve ye not, with scornful snuff,
 To say,—“ 'Tis a' confounded stuff!”
 If that 's the case, Sir, spare your spite,
 For, faith, 'tis not for you I write:
 Gae gi'e your censure higher scope,
 And Congreve criticise, or Pope;
 Young's satires, or Swift's merry smile;
 These, these are writers worth your while:
 On me your talents wad be lost,
 And tho' you gain a simple boast;
 I want a reader wha deals fair,
 And not ae real fault will spare;
 Yet, with good-humour, will allow
 Me praise whene'er 'tis justly due:
 Blest be sic readers!—but the rest,
 That are with spleen and spite oppress'd,
 May bards arise to gar them pine
 To death, with lays the maist divine,
 For sma's the skaith they 'll get by mine.

How

How many, and of various natures,
Are on this globe the crowd of creatures !
In Mexicanian forests fly
Thousands that never wing'd our sky ;
'Mangst them there 's ane of feathers fair,
That in the music bears nae skair,
Only an imitating ranter,
For whilk he bears the name of taunter ;
Soon as the sun springs frae the east,
Upon the branch he cocks his crest,
Attentive, when frae bough and spray
The tunefu' throats salute the day :
The brainless beau attacks them a',
No ane escapes him great or sma' ;
Frae some he takes the tone and manner,
Frae this a bass, frae that a tenor,
Turns love's soft plaint to a dull bustle,
And sprightly airs to a vile whistle ;
Still labouring thus to counterfeit,
He shaws the poorness of his wit.
Anes, when with echo loud the taunter
Tret with contempt ilk native chanter,
Ane of them says,—“ We own 'tis true,
“ Few praises to our sangs are due ;
“ But pray, Sir, let 's have ane frae you.”

S E R I O U S.



1721.

TARTANA; OR, THE PLAID.

YE Caledonian beauties ! who have long
Been both the muse and subject of my song,
Assist your bard, who, in harmonious lays,
Designs the glory of your plaid to raise.
How my fond breast with blazing ardor glows,
Whene'er my song on you just praise bestows !

Phœbus and his imaginary nine
With me have lost the title of divine ;
To no such shadows will I homage pay,
These to my real muses shall give way ;
My muses who, on smooth meand'ring Tweed,
Stray thro' the groves, or grace the clover mead ;
Or these who bathe themselves where haughty Clyde
Does roaring o'er his lofty cat'racts ride ;

Or you who, on the banks of gentle Tay,
Drain from the flow'rs the early dew's of May,
To varnish on your cheek the crimson dye,
Or make the white the falling snow outvie ;
And you who, on Edina's streets, display
Millions of matchless beauties every day ;
Inspir'd by you, what poet can desire
To warm his genius at a brighter fire ?

I sing the plaid, and sing with all my skill ;
Mount then, O Fancy ! standard to my will ;
Be strong each thought, run soft each happy line,
That gracefulness and harmony may shine,
Adapted to the beautiful design.
Great is the subject, vast th' exalted theme,
And shall stand fair in endless rolls of fame.

The plaid's antiquity comes first in view,
Precedence to antiquity is due :
Antiquity contains a certain spell,
To make e'en things of little worth excel ;
To smallest subjects gives a glaring dash,
Protecting high-born idiots from the lash ;
Much more 'tis valu'd when, with merit plac'd,
It graces merit, and by merit's grac'd.

O, first of garbs ! garment of happy fate !
So long employ'd, of such an antique date ;

Look

Look back some thousand years, till records fail
 And lose themselves in some romantic tale,
 We'll find our godlike fathers nobly scorn'd
 To be with any other drefs adorn'd,
 Before bafe foreign fashions interwove,
 Which 'gainst their int'reft and their brav'ry ftrove.
 'Twas they could boast their freedom with proud

Rome,

And, arm'd in fteel, defpife the fenate's doom :
 Whilst o'er the globe their eagle they difplay'd,
 And conquer'd nations prostrate homage paid,
 They only, they unconquer'd ftood their ground,
 And to the mighty empire fix'd the bound.
 Our native prince who then fupply'd the throne
 In plaid array'd magnificently fhone ;
 Nor feem'd his purple or his ermine lefs,
 Though cover'd with the Caledonian drefs.
 In this at court the thanes were gaily clad,
 With this the fhepherds and the hinds were glad,
 In this the warrior wrapt his brawny arms,
 With this our beauteous mothers veil'd their charms,
 When ev'ry youth and ev'ry lovely maid
 Deem'd it a difhabille to want their plaid.

O, heav'ns ! how chang'd, how little look their
 race !

When foreign chains with foreign modes take place ;
 When Eaft and Western Indies muft combine
 To deck the fop and make the gegaw fhine.

Thus while the Grecian troops in Persia lay,
 And learn'd the habit to be soft and gay,
 By luxury enerv'd, they lost the day.

I ask'd Varell, what soldiers he thought best ?
 And thus he answer'd to my plain request :
 " Were I to lead battalions out to war,
 " And hop'd to triumph in the victor's car,
 " To gain the loud applause of worthy fame,
 " And columns rais'd to eternize my name,
 " I 'd choose, had I my choice, that hardy race
 " Who fearless can look terrors in the face ;
 " Who 'midst the snows the best of limbs can fold
 " In tartan plaids, and smile at chilling cold :
 " No useless trash should pain my soldier's back,
 " No canvas tents make loaden axels crack ;
 " No rattling silks I 'd to my standards bind,
 " But bright tartanas waving in the wind ;
 " The plaid alone should all my ensigns be,
 " This army from such banners would not flee.
 " These, these were they who, naked, taught the
 " way
 " To fight with art, and boldly gain the day."
 E'en great Gustavus stood himself amaz'd,
 While at their wond'rous skill and force he gaz'd.
 With such brave troops one might o'er Europe run,
 Make out what Richlieu fram'd, and Lewis had
 begun.

Degen'rate

Degen'rate men!—Now, ladies, please to fit,
That I the plaid in all its airs may hit,
With all the pow'rs of softness mixt with wit.

While scorching Titan tawns the shepherd's brow,
And whistling hinds sweat lagging at the plow,
The piercing beams Brucina can defy,
Not sun-burnt she 's, nor dazzled is her eye.
Ugly 's the mask, the fan 's a trifling toy
To still at church some girl or restless boy ;
Fix'd to one spot 's the pine and myrtle shades ;
But on each motion wait th' umbrellian plaids,
Repelling dust when winds disturb the air,
And give a check to ev'ry ill-bred stare.

Light as the pinions of the airy fry
Of larks and linnets who traverse the sky,
Is the tartana, spun so very fine
Its weight can never make the fair repine,
By raising ferments in her glowing blood,
Which cannot be escap'd within the hood ;
Nor does it move beyond its proper sphere,
But lets the gown in all its shape appear ;
Nor is the straightness of her waist deny'd
To be by ev'ry ravish'd eye survey'd ;
For this the hoop may stand at largest bend,
It comes not high, nor can its weight offend.

The hood and mantle make the tender faint,
I'm pain'd to see them moving like a tent ;
By heather Jenny in her blanket drest
The hood and mantle fully are exprest,
Which round her neck with rags is firmly bound,
While heather besoms loud she screams around.
Was goody Strode so great a pattern ? Say,
Are ye to follow when such lead the way ?
But know each fair who shall this furtout use,
You're no more Scots, and cease to be my
muse.

The smoothest labours of the Persian loom,
Lin'd in the plaid, set off the beauty's bloom ;
Faint is the gloss, nor come the colours nigh,
Tho' white as milk, or dipt in scarlet dye !
The lily pluckt by fair Pringella grieves,
Whose whiter hand outshines its snowy leaves ;
No wonder then white silks in our esteem,
Match'd with her fairer face, they fully'd seem.

If shining red Campbella's cheeks adorn,
Our fancies straight conceive the blushing morn,
Beneath whose dawn the sun of beauty lies,
Nor need we light but from Campbella's eyes.

If lin'd with green Stuarda's plaid we view,
Or thine, Ramseia, edg'd around with blue,

One

One shews the spring when nature is most kind,
The other heav'n whose spangles lift the mind.

A garden-plot enrich'd with chosen flow'rs,
In sun-beams basking after vernal show'rs,
Where lovely pinks in sweet confusion rise,
And amaranths and eglantines surprise,
Hedg'd round with fragrant briar and jessamine,
The rosy thorn and variegated green ;
These give not half that pleasure to the view
As when, Fergusia, mortals gaze on you ;
You raise our wonder, and our love engage,
Which makes us curse and yet admire the hedge,
The silk and tartan hedge, which doth conspire
With you to kindle love's soft spreading fire.
How many charms can ev'ry fair one boast !
How oft 's our fancy in the plenty lost !
These more remote, these we admire the most :
What's too familiar often we despise,
But rarity makes still the value rise.

If Sol himself should shine thro' all the day,
We cloy, and lose the pleasure of his ray,
But if behind some marly cloud he steal,
Nor for some time his radiant head reveal,
With brighter charms his absence he repays,
And ev'ry sun-beam seems a double blaze :
So when the fair their dazzling lustres shroud,
And disappoint us with a tartan cloud,

How

How fondly do we peep with wishful eye,
Transported when one lovely charm we spy !
Oft to our cost, ah me ! we often find
The pow'r of love strikes deep, tho' he be blind ;
Perch'd on a lip, a cheek, a chin, or smilè,
Hits with surprise, and throws young hearts in jail.

From when the cock proclaims the rising day,
And milk-maids sing around sweet curds and whey,
Till grey-ey'd twilight, harbinger of night,
Pursues o'er silver mountains * sinking light,
I can unwearied from my casements view
The plaid, with something still about it new.
How are we pleas'd when, with a handsome air,
We see Hepburna walk with easy care !
One arm half circles round her slender waist,
The other like an iv'ry pillar plac'd,
To hold her plaid around her modest face,
Which faves her blushes with the gayest grace ;
If in white kids her taper fingers move,
Or, unconfin'd, jet thro' the sable glove.

With what a pretty action Keitha holds
Her plaid, and varies oft its airy folds !
How does that naked space the spirits move,
Between the ruffled lawn and envious glove !

We

* *Silver mountains*] Ochel Hills.

We by the fample, though no more be feen,
Imagine all that's fair within the fcreen.

Thus belles in plaids vail and difplay their charms,
The love-fick youth thus bright Humea warms,
And with her graceful mien her rivals all alarms.

The plaid itfelf gives pleasure to the fight,
To fee how all its fets imbibe the light,
Forming fome way, which e'en to me lies hid,
White, black, blue, yellow, purple, green, and
red.

Let Newton's royal club through prifms ftare,
To view celestial dyes with curious care,
I'll pleafe myfelf, nor fhall my fight afk aid
Of crystal gimcracks to furvey the plaid.

How decent is the plaid, when in the pew
It hides th' enchanting fair from ogler's view!
The mind's oft crowded with ill-tim'd defires
When nymphs unveil'd approach the fared choirs.
E'en fenators who guard the commonweal,
Their minds may rove:—are mortals made of
fteel?

The finifh'd beaux ftart up in all their airs,
And fearch out beauties more than mind their
pray'rs.

The wainfcot forty-fixes are perplext
To be eclips'd, fpite makes them drop the text.

The

The younger gaze at each fine thing they see ;
The orator himself is scarcely free.
Ye then who would your piety exprefs,
To facred domes ne'er come in naked drefs.
The pow'r of modesty fhall ftill prevail ;
Then, Scotian virgins, ufe your native veil.

Thus far young Cosmel read ; then ftar'd and
curft,
And ask'd me very gravely, how I durft
Advance fuch praifes for a thing despis'd ?
He fmiling fwore I had been ill advis'd.

To you, faid I, perhaps this may feem true,
And numbers vail, not fools, may fide with you ;
As many fhall my sentiments approve :
Tell me what 's not the butt of fcorn and love ?
Were mankind all agreed to think one way,
What would divines and poets have to fay ?
No enfigns would on martial fields be fpread,
And corpus juris never would be read :
We'd need no councils, parliaments, nor kings,
E'en wit and learning would turn filly things.
You mifs my meaning ftill, I'm much afraid,
I would not have them always wear the plaid.

Old Salem's royal fage, of wits the prime,
Said, for each thing there was a proper time.

Night

Night 's but Aurora's plaid, that ta'en away
We lose the pleasure of returning day ;
E'en thro' the gloom, when view'd in sparkling skies,
Orbs scarcely seen yet gratify our eyes :
So thro' Hamilla's open'd plaid we may
Behold her heav'nly face and heaving milky way.
Spanish reserve, join'd with a Gallic air,
If manag'd well, becomes the Scotian fair.

Now you say well, said he ; but when's the time
That they may drop the plaid without a crime ?

Then I—

Left, O fair nymphs, ye should our patience tire,
And starch reserve extinguish gen'rous fire ;
Since heav'n your soft victorious charms design'd
To form a smoothness on the rougher mind ;
When from the bold and noble toils of war,
The rural cares, or labours of the bar,
From these hard studies which are learn'd and grave,
And some from dang'rous riding o'er the wave,
The Caledonian manly youth resort
To their Edina, love's great mart and port,
And crowd her theatres with all that grace
Which is peculiar to the Scotian race ;
At concert, ball, or some fair's marriage-day,
O then with freedom all that 's sweet display.
When beauty's to be judg'd without a veil,
And not its pow'r met out as by retail,

But

But wholesale all at once to fill the mind
 With sentiments gay, soft, and frankly kind,
 Throw by the plaid, and like the lamp of day,
 When there 's no cloud to intercept his ray ;
 So shine Maxella, nor their censure fear,
 Who, slaves to vapours, dare not so appear.

On Ida's height, when to the royal swain,
 To know who should the prize of beauty gain,
 Jove sent his two fair daughters and his wife,
 That he might be the judge to end the strife ;
 Hermes was guide : they found him by a tree,
 And thus they spake, with air divinely free :
 " Say, Paris, which is fairest of us three ?"
 To Jove's high queen and the celestial maids,
 'Ere he would pass his sentence, cry'd, " No
 " plaids."

Quickly the goddesses obey'd his call,
 In simple nature's dress he view'd them all,
 Then to Cytherea gave the golden ball.

Great critics, hail ! our dread ; whose love or
 hate
 Can, with a frown or smile, give verse its fate ;
 Attend, while o'er this field my fancy roams,
 I 've somewhat more to say, and here it comes.

When virtue was a crime, in Tancred's reign,
 There was a noble youth who would not deign

To

To own for sov'reign one a slave to vice,
Or blot his conscience at the highest price ;
For which his death 's devis'd, with hellish art
To tear from his warm breast his beating heart.
Fame told the tragic news to all the fair,
Whose num'rous sighs and groans bound thro' the
air :

All mourn his fate, tears trickle from each eye,
Till his kind sister threw the woman by ;
She, in his stead, a gen'rous off'ring staid,
And he, the tyrant baulk'd, hid in her plaid.
So when Æneas with Achilles strove *,
The goddess-mother hasted from above,
Well seen in fate, prompt by maternal love,
Wrapt him in mist, and warded off the blow
That was design'd him by his valiant foe.

I of the plaid could tell a hundred tales ;
Then hear another, since that strain prevails.

The tale no records tell, it is so old ;
It happen'd in the easy age of gold,
When am'rous Jove, chief of th' Olympian gods,
Pall'd with Saturnia, came to our abodes,
A beauty-hunting ; for, in these soft days,

Nor

* Homer.

Nor gods nor men delighted in a chace
That would destroy not propagate their race.
Beneath a fir-tree in Glentaner's groves *,
Where, 'ere gay fabrics rose, swains fung their
 loves,
Iris lay sleeping in the open air,
A bright tartana veil'd the lovely fair :
The wounded god beheld her matchless charms
With earnest eyes, and grasp'd her in his arms.
Soon he made known to her, with gaining skill,
His dignity, and import of his will.
" Speak thy desire," the divine monarch said.
" Make me a goddess," cry'd the Scotian maid ;
" Nor let hard fate bereave me of my plaid."—
" Be thou the handmaid to my mighty queen,"
Said Jove ; " and to the world be often seen
" With the celestial bow, and thus appear
" Clad with these radiant colours as thy wear."

Now say, my muse, 'ere thou forsake the field,
What profit does the plaid to Scotia yield ?
Justly that claims our love, esteem, and boast,
Which is produc'd within our native coast.
On our own mountains grows the golden fleece,
Richer than that which Jason brought to Greece ;
A bene-

* *Glentaner's groves*] A large wood in Aberdeenshire.

A beneficial branch of Albion's trade,
 And the first parent of the Tartan plaid.
 Our fair ingenious ladies' hands prepare
 The equal threads, and give the dyes with care.
 Thousands of artists fullen hours decoy
 On rattling looms, and view their webs with
 joy.

May she be curst to starve in frogland fens,
 To wear a *fala* * ragg'd at both the ends.
 Groan still beneath the antiquated suit,
 And die a maid at fifty-five to boot.
 May she turn quaggy fat, or crooked dwarf,
 Be ridicul'd while primm'd up in her scarf;
 May spleen and spite still keep her on the fret,
 And live till she outlive her beauty's date.
 May all this fall, and more than I have said,
 Upon that wench who disregards the plaid.

But with the sun let ev'ry joy arise,
 And from soft slumbers lift her happy eyes;
 May blooming youth be fixt upon her face,
 Till she has seen her fourth descending race;
 Blest with a mate with whom she can agree,
 And never want the finest of bohea;

May

* *Fala*] A little square cloth worn by the Dutch women.

May ne'er the miser's fears make her afraid,
Who joins with me, with me admires the plaid.
Let bright tartanas henceforth ever shine,
And Caledonian goddesses enshrine.

Fair judges, to your censure I submit ;
If you allow this poem to have wit,
I 'll look with scorn upon these musty fools
Who only move by old worm-eaten rules.
But with th' ingenious if my labours take,
I wish them ten times better for their sake.
Who shall esteem this vain are in the wrong;
I 'll prove the moral is prodigious strong :
I hate to trifle, men should act like men,
And for their country only draw their sword and pen.

1718.

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH'S
ADDRESS TO THE COUNTRY.

FROM me Edina, to the brave and fair,
 Health, joy, and love, and banishment of care.
 Forasmuch as bare fields and gurdy skies
 Make rural scenes ungrateful to the eyes,
 When hyperborean blasts confound the plain,
 Driving by turns light snow and heavy rain ;
 Ye swains and nymphs, forsake the wither'd grove,
 That no damp colds may nip the buds of love ;
 Since winds and tempests o'er the mountains ride,
 Haste here where choice of pleasures do reside ;
 Come to my tow'rs and leave th' unpleasant scene,
 My cheerful bosom shall your warmth sustain.

Screen'd in my walls you may bleak winter
 shun,
 And for a while forget the distant sun ;
 My blazing fires, bright lamps, and sparkling wine,
 As summer's sun shall warm, like him shall shine.

My witty clubs of minds that move at large,
 With ev'ry glass can some great thought discharge:

When from my senate, and the toils of law,
T' unbend the mind from bus'ness, you withdraw
With such gay friends to laugh some hours away,
My winter ev'n shall ding the summer's day.

My schools of law produce a manly train
Of fluent orators, who right maintain :
Practis'd t' express themselves a graceful way,
An eloquence shines forth in all they say.

Some Raphael, Rubens, or Vandyke admire,
Whose bosoms glow with such a godlike fire :
Of my own race I have, who shall ere long,
Challenge a place amongst th' immortal throng.

Others in smoothest numbers are profuse,
And can in Mantuan dactyls lead the muse :
And others can with music make you gay,
With sweetest sounds Corelli's art display,
While they around in softest measures sing,
Or beat melodious solos from the string.

What pleasure can exceed to know what's
great,
The hinge of war, and winding draughts of state ?
These and a thousand things th' aspiring youth
May learn with pleasure from the sage's mouth ;
While they full-fraughted judgments do unload,
Relating to affairs home and abroad.

The

The gen'rous soul is fir'd with noble flame
 To emulate victorious Eugene's fame,
 Who with fresh glories decks th' Imperial throne,
 Making the haughty Ott'man empire groan :
 He'll learn when warlike Sweden and the Czar,
 The Danes and Prussians, shall demit the war ;
 T' observe what mighty turns of fate may spring
 From this new war rais'd by Iberia's king.

Long ere the morn from eastern seas arise
 To sweep night-shades from off the vaulted skies,
 Oft love or law in dreams your mind may tofs,
 And push the sluggish senses to their posts ;
 The hautboy's distant notes shall then oppose
 Your phantom cares, and lull you to repose.

To visit and take tea, the well-dress'd fair
 May pass the crowd unruffled in her chair ;
 No dust or mire her shining foot shall stain,
 Or on the horizontal hoop give pain.
 For beaux and belles no city can compare,
 Nor shew a galaxy so made, so fair :
 The ears are charm'd, and ravish'd are the eyes,
 When at the concert my fair stars arise.
 What poets of fictitious beauties sing,
 Shall in bright order fill the dazzling ring :
 From Venus, Pallas, and the spouse of Jove,
 They 'd gain the prize, judg'd by the god of
 love;

Their sun-burnt features would look dull and
fade,
Compar'd with my sweet white and blushing red.
The character of beauties so divine
The muse for want of words cannot define.
The panting soul beholds, with awful love,
Impress'd on clay th' angelic forms above,
Whose softest smiles can pow'rfully impart
Raptures sublime in dumb-show to the heart.

The strength of all these charms if ye defy,
My court of justice shall make you comply.
Welcome, my session, thou my bosom warms,
Thrice three times welcome to thy mother's arms;
Thy father long (rude man!) has left my bed,
Thou 'rt now my guard, and support of my trade;
My heart yearns after thee with strong desire,
Thou dearest image of thy ancient fire :
Should proud Augusta take thee from me too,
So great a loss would make Edina bow ;
I 'd sink beneath a weight I could not bear,
And in a heap of rubbish disappear.

Vain are such fears :—I 'll rear my head in state,
My boding heart foretells a glorious fate :
New stately structures on new streets shall rise,
And new-built churches tow'ring to the skies.
From utmost Thulé to the Dover-rock,
Britain's best blood in crowds to me shall flock ;
A num'rous

A num'rous fleet shall be my Fortha's pride,
While they in her calm roads at anchor ride ;
These from each coast shall bring what's great and
rare,
To animate the brave, and please the fair.

1721.

ON THE PRESERVATION OF MR. BRUCE
AND HIS SCHOOL-FELLOWS,

IN ST. ANDREW'S BAY,

On the 19th of AUGUST 1710.

SIX times the day with light and hope arose,
As oft the night her terrors did oppose,
While, toss'd on roaring waves, the tender crew
Had nought but death and horror in their view :
Pale famine, seas, bleak cold, at equal strife,
Conspiring all against their bloom of life ;
Whilst, like the lamp's last flame, their trembling
souls
Are on the wing to leave their mortal goals ;
And death before them stands with frightful stare,
Their spirits spent, and sunk down to despair.

Behold th' indulgent Providential eye
With watchful rays descending from on high ;
Angels came posting down the divine beam,
To save the helpless in their last extreme :
Unseen the heav'nly guard about them flock,
Some rule the winds, some lead them up the rock,
While other two attend the dying pair,
To waft their young white souls thro' fields of air.

1721.

ON CONTENT.

Content is wealth, the riches of the mind ;
 And happy he who can that treasure find :
 But the base miser starves amidst his store,
 Broods on his gold, and griping still for more,
 Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor.

DRYDEN.

Virtue was taught in verse, and Athens' glory rose.

PRIOR.

WHEN genial beams wade thro' the dewy morn,
 And from the clod invite the sprouting corn ;
 When chequer'd green, wing'd music, new-blown
 scents,
 Conspir'd to soothe the mind, and please each
 sense ;
 Then down a shady haugh I took my way,
 Delighted with each flow'r and budding spray ;
 Musing on all that hurry, pain, and strife,
 Which flow from the fantastic ills of life.
 Enlarg'd from such distresses of the mind,
 Due gratitude to heav'n my thoughts refin'd,
 And made me, in the laughing sage's * way,
 As a mere farce the murm'ring world survey ;
 Finding

* Democritus.

Finding imagin'd maladies abound
Tenfold for one which gives a real wound.

Godlike is he whom no false fears annoy,
Who lives content, and grasps the present joy ;
Whose mind is not with wild convulsions rent,
Of pride, and avarice, and discontent ;
Whose well-train'd passions, with a pious awe,
Are all subordinate to reason's law :
Then smooth content arises like the day,
And makes each rugged phantom fly away :
To lowest men she gives a lib'ral share
Of solid bliss ; she mitigates our care,
Enlarging joys, administering health ;
The rich man's pleasure, and the poor man's
wealth ;
A train of comforts on her nod attend,
And to her sway profits and honours bend.

Hail, blest content ! who art by heav'n design'd
Parent of health and cheerfulness of mind ;
Serene content shall animate my song,
And make th' immortal numbers smooth and
strong.

Silenus, thou whose hoary beard and head
Experience speak, and youth's attention plead ;
Retail thy gather'd knowledge, and disclose
What state of life enjoys the most repose.

Thus

Thus I addrest : and thus the ancient bard :—
First, to no state of life fix thy regard :
All mortals may be happy if they please,
Not rack'd with pain, nor ling'ring in disease.

Midas the wretch, wrapt in his patched rags,
With empty paunch sits brooding o'er his bags ;
Meagre his look, his mind in constant fright,
If winds but move his windows in the night ;
If dogs should bark, or but a mouse make din,
He sweats and starts, and thinks the thief's got
in ;

His sleep forsakes him till the dawn appears,
Which ev'ry thing but such a caitiff cheers :
It gives him pain to buy a farthing light,
He jums at home in darkness all the night.
What makes him manage with such cautious pain?
'T would break a sum ; a farthing spent so vain !
If e'er he's pleas'd, 'tis when some needful man
Gives ten per cent. with an insuring pawn.
Though he's provided in as much would serve
Whole Nestor's years, he ever fears to starve.
Tell him of alms : alas ! he'd rather choose
Damnation, and the promis'd bliss refuse.—
And is there such a wretch beneath the sun ?—
Yes, he return'd, thousands instead of one
To whom content is utterly unknown.—
Are all the rich men such ?—He answer'd, no ;
Marcus hath wealth, and can his wealth bestow

Upon

Upon himself, his friends, and on the poor ;
Enjoys enough, and wishes for no more.

Reverse of these is he who braves the sky,
Cursing his Maker when he throws the die :
Gods, devils, furies, hell, heav'n, blood and
wounds,
Promiscuous fly in bursts of tainted sounds :
He to perdition doth his soul bequeath,
Yet inly trembles when he thinks of death.
Except at game, he ne'er employs his thought,
Till his'd and pointed at—not worth a groat.
The desp'rate remnant of a large estate
Goes at one throw, and points his gloomy fate ;
He finds his folly now, but finds too late.
Ill brooks my fondling master to be poor,
Bred up to nought but bottle, game, and whore :
How pitiful he looks without his rent !
They who fly virtue, ever fly content.

Now I beheld the sage look'd less severe,
Whilst pity join'd his old satyric leer.
The weakly mind, said he, is quickly torn ;
Men are not gods, some frailties must be borne :
Heav'n's bounteous hand all in their turn
abuse ;
The happiest men at times their fate refuse,
Befool themselves, and trump up an excuse.

Is Lucius but a subaltern of foot ?
His equal Gallus is a coronet.

Sterilla shuns a gossiping, and why ?
The teeming mother fills her with envy.
The pregnant matron's grief as much prevails,
Some of the children always something ails ;
One boy is sick, t' other has broke his head,
And nurse is blam'd when little miss is dead.

A duchess, on a velvet couch reclin'd,
Blabs her fair cheeks till she is almost blind ;
Poor Phillis' death the briny pearls demands,
Who ceases now to snarl and lick her hands.

The politicians who, in learn'd debates,
With penetration carve out kingdoms' fates,
Look sour, drink coffee, shrug, and read gazettes.
Deep sunk in craft of state their souls are lost,
And all their hopes depend upon the post :
Each mail that's due they curse the contrair
wind ;
'Tis strange if this way men contentment find :
Though old, their humours I am yet to learn,
Who vex themselves in what they've no concern.

Ninny, the glaring fop, who always runs
In tradesmen's books, which makes the careful
duns

Often

Often ere ten to break his slumb'ring rest :
Whilst with their craving clamours he's oppress'd,
He frames excuses till his cranny akes,
Then thinks he justly damns the curf'd sneaks.
The disappointed dun, with as much ire,
Both threats and curses till his breast's on fire ;
Then home he goes and pours it on his house,
His servants suffer oft, and oft his spouse.

Some groan through life amidst a heap of cares,
To load with too much wealth their lazy heirs.
The lazy heir turns all to ridicule,
And all his life proclaims his father fool :
He toils in spending ; leaves a threadbare son,
To scrape anew, as had his grandfire done.

How is the fair Myrtilla's bosom fir'd,
If Leda's fable locks are more admir'd ;
While Leda does her secret sighs discharge,
Because her mouth's a straw-breadth, ah ! too
large.

Thus sung the fire, and left me to invite
The scorching beams in some cool green retreat ;
Where gentle slumber seiz'd my weary'd brain,
And mimic fancy op'd the following scene :

Methought I stood upon a rising ground,
A splendid landscape open'd all around,

Rocks,

Rocks, rivers, meadows, gardens, parks, and
woods,

And domes which hide their turrets in the clouds.

To me approach'd a nymph divinely fair,

Celestial virtue shone through all her air :

A nymph for grace, her wisdom more renown'd,

Adorn'd each grace, and both true valour crown'd.

Around her heav'nly smiles a helmet blaz'd,

And graceful as she mov'd, a spear she gently
rais'd.

My sight at first the lustre scarce could bear,

Her dazzling glories shone so strong and clear ;

A majesty sublime, with all that's sweet,

Did adoration claim, and love invite.

I felt her wisdom's charm my thoughts inspire,

Her dauntless courage set my soul on fire :

The maid, when thus I knew, I soon address,

My present wishful thoughts the theme suggest :—

Of all th' ethereal pow'rs, thou, noblest maid,

To human weakness lend'st the readiest aid :

To where content and her blest train reside,

Immortal Pallas, deign to be my guide.—

With my request well pleas'd, our course we
bent

To find the habitation of content.

Through fierce Bellona's tents we first advanc'd,
Where cannons bounc'd, and nervous horses
pranc'd :

Here

Here Vi-et-armis fat, with dreadful awe
And daring front, to prop each nation's law;
Attending squadrons on her motions wait,
Array'd in deaths, and fearless of their fate.
Here chieftain souls glow'd with as great a fire
As his who made the world but one empire :
E'en in low ranks brave spirits might be found,
Who wanted nought of monarchs but a crown.
But, ah ! ambition stood a foe to peace,
Shaking the empty fob, and ragged fleece ;
Which were more hideous to these sons of war
Than brimstone, smoke, and storms of bullets are.
Here, said my guide, content is rarely found,
Where blood and noisy jars beset the ground.

Trade's wealthy warehouse next fell in our way,
Where in great bales part of each nation lay :
The Spanish citron, and Hesperia's oil,
Persia's soft product, and the Chinese toil ;
Warm Borneo's spices, Arab's scented gum,
The Polish amber, and the Saxon mum ;
The orient pearl, Holland's lace and toys,
And tinsel work which the fair nun employs ;
From India iv'ry and the clouded cane,
And coch'neal from the straits of Magellan ;
The Scandinavian rosin, hemp, and tar,
The Lapland furs, and Russia caviare ;
The Gallic puncheon charg'd with ruby juice,
Which makes the hearts of gods and men rejoice ;
Britannia

Britannia here pours from her plenteous horn
 Her shining mirrors, clock-work, cloths, and corn.
 Here cent. per cents. fat poring o'er their books,
 While many shew'd the bankrupts in their looks;
 Who, by mismanagement, their stock had spent,
 Curs'd these hard times, and blam'd the govern-
 ment.

The missive letter, and peremptor bill,
 Forbade them rest, and call'd forth all their skill.
 Uncertain credit bore the sceptre here,
 And her prime ministers were hope and fear.
 The furly chuffs demanded what we fought?—
 Content, said I: may she with gold be bought?—
 Content! said one; then star'd and bit his thumb,
 And leering ask'd, if I was worth a plumb*?

Love's fragrant fields, where mildest western
 gales,
 Loaden with sweets, perfume the hills and dales;
 Where longing lovers haunt the streams and glades,
 And cooling groves whose verdure never fades:
 Thither with joy and hasty steps we strode,
 There sure I thought our long'd-for bliss abode.
 Whom first we met on that enchanted plain
 Was a tall yellow-hair'd young pensive swain;
 Him,

* One hundred thousand pounds.

Him, I address'd :—" O youth ! what heav'nly
pow'r

" Commands and graces yon Elyfian bow'r ?

" Sure 'tis content, else much I am deceiv'd."

The shepherd sigh'd, and told me that I rav'd :

" Rare she appears, unless on some fine day

" She grace a nuptial, but soon hastes away :

" If her you seek, soon hence you must remove,

" Her presence is precarious in love."

Through these and other shrines we wander'd
long,

Which merit no description in my song,

Till at the last methought we cast our eye

Upon an antique temple, square and high,

Its area wide, its spire did pierce the sky ;

On adamantine Doric pillars rear'd,

Strong Gothic work the massy work appear'd ;

Nothing seem'd little, all was great design'd,

Which pleas'd the eye at once, and fill'd the mind.

Whilst wonder did my curious thoughts engage,

To us approach'd a studious rev'rend sage ;

Both awe and kindness his grave aspect bore,

Which spoke him rich with wisdom's finest store.

He asked our errand there :—Straight I reply'd,

" Content: in these high tow'rs does she reside?"—

" Not far from hence," said he, " her palace
stands ;

" Ours she regards, as we do her demands ;

" Philosophy

“ Philosophy sustains her peaceful sway,
 “ And in return she feasts us ev’ry day.”
 Then straight an ancient telescope he brought,
 By Socrates and Epictetus wrought ;
 Improved since, made easier to the sight,
 Lengthen’d the tube, the glasses ground more
 bright ;

Through this he shew’d a hill, whose lofty brow
 Enjoy’d the sun, while vapours all below,
 In pitchy clouds, encircled it around,
 Where phantoms of most horrid forms abound ;
 The ugly brood of lazy spleen and fear,
 Frightful in shape, most monstrous appear.

Then thus my guide :—

“ Your way lies thro’ yon gloom ; be not aghast ;
 “ Come briskly on, you’ll jest them when they ’re
 “ past ;

“ Mere empty spectres, harmless as the air,
 “ Which merit not your notice, less your care.”

Encourag’d with her word, I thus address’d
 My noble guide, and grateful joy express’d :—

“ O sacred wisdom ! thine ’s the source of light,
 “ Without thy blaze the world would grope in
 “ night ;

“ Of woe and bliss thou only art the test,
 “ Falsehood and truth before thee stand confess’d ;
 “ Thou mak’st a double life, one nature gave,
 “ But without thine what is it mortals have ?
 “ A breathing motion grazing to the grave.”

Now, through the damps methought we boldly
went,
Smiling at all the grins of discontent :
Tho' oft pull'd back, the rising ground we gain'd,
Whilst inward joy my weary'd limbs sustain'd.
Arriv'd the height, whose top was large and plain,
And what appear'd soon recompens'd my pain,
Nature's whole beauty deck'd th' enamell'd scene.

Amidst the glade the sacred palace stood,
The architecture not so fine as good ;
Nor scrimp, nor gousty, regular, and plain,
Plain were the columns which the roof sustain ;
An easy greatness in the whole was found,
Where all that nature wanted did abound :
But here no beds are screen'd with rich brocade,
Nor fuel-logs in silver grates are laid ;
No broken China bowls disturb the joy
Of waiting handmaid, or the running-boy ;
Nor in the cupboard heaps of plate are rang'd,
'To be with each splenetic fashion chang'd.

A weather-beaten centry watch'd the gate,
Of temper cross, and practis'd in debate :
Till once acquaint with him, no entry here,
Though brave as Cæsar, or as Helen fair :
To strangers fierce, but with familiars tame,
And Touchstone Disappointment was his name.

This

This fair inscription shone above the gate,
 " Fear none but Him, whose will directs thy fate."
 With smile austere he lifted up his head,
 Pointed the characters, and bid us read.
 We did, and stood resolv'd. The gates at last
 Op'd of their own accord, and in we past.

Each day a herald, by the queen's command,
 Was order'd on a mount to take his stand,
 And thence to all the earth this offer make :
 " Who are inclin'd her favours to partake,
 " Shall have them free, if they small rubs can
 " bear
 " Of disappointment, spleen, and bug-bear fear."

Rais'd on a throne within the outer gate,
 The goddess sat, her vot'ries round her wait ;
 The beautiful divinity disclos'd
 Sweetness sublime, which roughest cares compos'd :
 Her looks sedate, yet joyful and serene,
 Not rich her dress, but suitable and clean ;
 Unfurrow'd was her brow, her cheeks were
 smooth,
 Though old as time, enjoy'd immortal youth ;
 And all her accents so harmonious flow'd,
 That ev'ry list'ning ear with pleasure glow'd.
 An olive garland on her head she wore,
 And her right hand a cornucopia bore.

Crofs Touchstone fill'd a bench without the door,
To try the sterling of each human ore :
Grim judge he was, and them away he sent,
Unfit t' approach the shrine of calm content.

To him a hoary dotard, lade' with bags :—
Unwieldy load to one who hardly drags
His being !—“ More than seventy years,” said he,
“ I've fought this court, till now unfound by me :
“ Now let me rest.”—“ Yes, if ye want no more :
“ But 'ere the sun has made his annual tour,
“ Know, grov'ling wretch ! thy wealth's without
“ thy pow'r.”

The thoughts of death, and ceasing from his gain,
Brought on the old man's head so sharp a pain,
Which dimm'd his optic nerves, and with the light,
He lost the palace, and crawl'd back to night.
Poor griping thing ! how useless is thy breath,
While nothing's so much long'd for as thy death ?
How meanly hast thou spent thy lease of years,
A slave to poverty, to toils, and fears !
And all to vie with some bleak rugged hill,
Whose rich contents millions of chests can fill.
As round the greedy rock clings to the mine,
And hinders it in open day to shine,
Till diggers hew it from the spar's embrace,
Making it circle, stamp with Cæsar's face ;
So dost thou hoard, and from thy prince purloin
His useful image, and thy country coin ;

Till

Till gaping heirs have freed th' imprison'd slave,
When, to their comfort, thou hast fill'd a grave.

The next, who with a janty air approach'd,
Was a gay youth, who thither had been coach'd :
Sleek were his Flanders mares, his liv'ries fine,
With glitt'ring gold his furniture did shine.
Sure such, methought, may enter when they
 please,

Who have all these appearances of ease.
Strutting he march'd, nor any leave he crav'd,
Attempt' to pass, but found himself deceiv'd.
Old Touchstone gave him on the breast a box,
Which op'd the sluices of a latent pox ;
Then bid his equipage in haste depart.
The youth look'd at them with a fainting heart ;
He found he could not walk, and bid them stay ;
Swore three cramp oaths, mounted, and wheel'd
 away.

The pow'r herself express'd thus, with a
 smile :—

“ These changing shadows are not worth our
 “ while ;
“ With smallest trifles oft their peace is torn,
“ If here at night, they scarcely wait the morn.”

Another beau, as fine, but more vivace,
Whose airs sat round him with an easy grace,

And well-bred motion, came up to the gate ;
 I lov'd him much, and trembled for his fate.
 The centry broke his clouded cane ;—he smil'd,
 Got fairly in, and all our fears beguil'd.
 The cane was soon renewed which had been broke,
 And thus the virtue to the circle spok :—
 “ Each thing magnificent or gay we grant
 “ To them who're capable to bear their want.”

Two handsome toasts came next, them well I
 knew,
 Their lovely make the court's observance drew :
 Three waiting-maids attended in the rear,
 Each loaden with as much as she could bear :
 One mov'd beneath a load of filks and lace,
 Another bore the off-sets of the face ;
 But the most bulky burden of the three,
 Was hers who bore th' utensils of bohea.
 My mind indulgent in their favour pled,
 Hoping no opposition would be made ;
 So mannerly, so smooth, so mild their eye,
 Enough almost to give content envy.
 But soon I found my error : the bold judge,
 Who acted as if prompted by some grudge,
 Them thus saluted with a hollow tone :—
 “ You're none of my acquaintance, get you gone :
 “ What loads of trum'ry these !—ha, where's my
 “ cros ?
 “ I'll try if these be solid ware, or bos.”

The

The China felt the fury of his blow,
And lost a being, or for use, or show ;
For use or show no more's each plate or cup,
But all in shards upon the threshold drop.
Now ev'ry charm, which deck'd their face before,
Gives place to rage, and beauty is no more :
The briny stream their rosy cheeks besmear'd,
Whilst they in clouds of vapours disappear'd.

A rustic hind, attir'd in home-spun grey,
With forked locks, and shoes bedaub'd with clay ;
Palms shod with horn ; his front fresh, brown, and
broad ;
With legs and shoulders fitted for a load :
He 'midst ten bawling children laugh'd and sung,
While consort hobnails on the pavement rung.
Up to the porter unconcern'd he came,
Forcing along his offspring and their dame ;
Cross Touchstone strove to stop him, but the clown
At handy-cuffs him match'd, and threw him down ;
And spite of him, into the palace went,
Where he was kindly welcom'd by content.

Two Busbian philosophers put in their claims,
Gamaliel and Critis were their names ;
But soon 's they had our British Homer seen,
With face unruffled, waiting on the queen,
Envious hate their furly bosoms fir'd,
Their colour chang'd, they from the porch retir'd ;
Backward

Backward they went, reflecting with much rage
On the bad taste and humour of the age,
Which paid so much respect to nat'ral parts,
While they were starving graduates of arts.
The goddesses fell a-laughing at the fools,
And sent them packing to their grammar-schools ;
Or in some garret elevate to dwell,
There, with Sisyphian toil, to teach young beaux
to spell.

Now, all this while, a gale of eastern wind
And cloudy skies oppress the human mind ;
The wind set west ; back'd with the radiant beams
Which warm'd the air, and danc'd upon the
streams,
Exhal'd the spleen, and sooth'd a world of souls,
Who crowded now the avenue in shoals.
Numbers in black, of widowers, relicts, heirs ;
Of new-wed lovers many handsome pairs ;
Men landed from abroad, from camps and seas ;
Others got through some dangerous disease ;
A train of belles adorn'd with something new ;
And e'en of ancient prudes there were a few,
Who were refresh'd with scandal and with tea,
Which, for a time, set them from vapours free ;
Here from their cups, the lower species flockt ;
And knaves with bribes and cheating methods
stockt.

The

The Pow'r survey'd the troop, and gave command,
They should no longer in the entry stand,
But be convey'd into chimera's tow'r,
There to attend her pleasure for an hour.

Soon as they enter'd, apprehension shook
The fabric ; fear was fixt on ev'ry look ;
Old age and poverty, disease, disgrace,
With horrid grin, star'd full in ev'ry face,
Which made them, trembling at their unknown
fate,
Issue in haste out by the postern gate.

None waited out their hour but only two,
Who had been wedded fifteen years ago :
The man had learn'd the world, and fix'd his
mind ;
His spouse was cheerful, beautiful, and kind ;
She neither fear'd the shock, nor phantom's stare ;
She thought her husband wise, and knew that he
was there.

Now while the court was sitting, my fair guide
Into a fine Elysium me convey'd :
I saw, or thought I saw, the spacious fields
Adorn'd with all prolific nature yields,
Profusely rich with her most valu'd store :
But as m' enchanted fancy wander'd o'er

The

The happy plain, new beauties seem'd to rise,
The fields were fled, and all was painted skies.
Pleas'd for a while, I wish'd the former scene;
Straight all return'd, and eas'd me of my pain.
Again the flow'ry meadows disappear,
And hills and groves their stately summits rear :
These sink again, and rapid rivers flow ;
Next from the rivers cities seem to grow.

Some time the fleeting scene I had forgot,
In busy thought entranc'd : with pain I fought
To know the hidden charm : straight all was fled,
And boundless heav'ns o'er boundless oceans spread.
Impatient, I obtest my noble guide,
“ Reveal this wond'rous secret ?” She reply'd :

“ We carry’d on what greatly we design’d,
 “ When all these human follies you resign’d,
 “ Ambition, lux’ry, and a cov’rous mind :
 “ Yet think not true content can thus be bought,
 “ There’s wanting still a train of virtuous thought.

" When me your leader prudently you chuse,
 " And, list'ning to my counsel, did refuse
 " Fantastick joys, your soul was thus prepar'd
 " For true content : and thus I do reward
 " Your gen'rous toil. Observe this wond'rous
 " clime ;
 " Of nature's blessings here are hid the prime :
 " But

“ But wife and virtuous thought, in constant
“ course,
“ Must draw these beauties from their hidden
“ source ;
“ The smallest intermissions will transform
“ The pleasant scene, and spoil each perfect charm.
“ 'Tis ugly vice will rob you of content,
“ And to your view all hellish woes present :
“ Nor grudge the care in virtue you employ,
“ Your present toil will prove your future joy.”
Then smil'd she heav'nly sweet, and parting said,
“ Hold fast your virtuous mind, of nothing be
“ afraid.”

A while the charming voice so fill'd my ears,
I griev'd the divine form no more appears :
Then to confirm my yet unsteady mind,
Under a lonely shadow I reclin'd,
To try the virtues of the clime I fought ;
Then straight call'd up a train of hideous thought ;
Famine, and blood, and pestilence appear,
Wild shrieks and loud laments disturb mine ear ;
New woes and horrors did my sight alarm,
Envy and hate compos'd the wretched charm.

Soon as I saw, I dropt the hateful view,
And thus I fought past pleasures to renew.
To heav'nly love my thoughts I next compose,
Then quick as thought the foll'wing fights disclose:
Streams,

Streams, meadows, grottos, groves, birds carolling;
Calmness, and temp'rate warmth, and endless spring:
A perfect transcript of these upper bow'rs,
The habitation of th' immortal pow'rs.

Back to the palace ravished I went,
Resolved to reside with blest content ;
Where all my special friends methought I met,
In order 'mongst the best of mankind set.
My soul, with too much pleasure, overcharg'd,
The captiv'd senses to their post enlarg'd.
Lifting mine eyes, I view'd declining day,
Sprang from the green, and homeward bent my
way ;
Reflecting on that hurry, pain, and strife,
Which flow from false and real ills of life.

1720.

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH'S SALUTATION
TO THE MARQUIS OF CARNARVON*.

WELCOME, my Lord : Heav'n be your guide,
And further your intention,
To whate'er place you sail or ride ;
To brighten your invention.
The book of mankind lang and wide
Is well worth your attention ;
Wherefore please some time here abide,
And measure the dimension
Of minds right stout.

O that ilk worthy British peer
Wad follow your example,
My auld grey head I yet wad rear,
And spread my skirts mair ample.

Should

* The eldest son of his Grace the Duke of Chandois, who, in May 1720, was at Edinburgh, in his tour through Scotland.

Should London poutch up a' the gear * ?
 She might spare me a sample :
 In troth his Highness should live here,
 For without oil our lamp will
 Gang blinkan out.

Lang syne, my Lord, I had a court,
 And nobles fill'd my cawfy ;
 But, since I have been fortune's sport,
 I look nae hawff sae gawfy.
 Yet here brave gentlemen resort,
 And mony a handsome lassie :
 Now that you 're lodg'd within my port,
 How well I wat they 'll a' say,
 Welcome, my Lord.

For you my best cheer I 'll produce,
 I 'll no mak muckle vaunting ;
 But routh for pleasure and for use,
 Whate'er you may be wanting,
 You 's hae at will to chap and chuse,
 For few things am I scant in ;
 The wale of well-set ruby juice †,
 When you like to be rantin,
 I can afford.

Than

* Edinburgh too often complained, that the north of Britain is so remote from the court, and so rarely enjoys the influence of British stars of the first magnitude.

† The most choice of fine claret.

Than I, nor Paris, nor Madrid,
Nor Rome, I trow 's mair able,
To busk you up a better bed,
Or trim a tighter table.
My fons are honourably bred,
To truth and friendship stable :
What my detracting faes * have said,
You'll find a feigned fable,
At the first fight.

May classic lear and letters belle,
And travelling conspire,
Ilk unjust notion to repel,
And godlike thoughts inspire ;
That in ilk action, wise and snell,
You may shaw manly fire ;
Sae the fair picture of himsel
Will give his Grace, your Sire,
Immense delight.

* Those who from prejudice have reproached us with being rude, inhospitable, and false.

1721.

ON THE PROSPECT OF PLENTY,

A POEM ON THE NORTH-SEA FISHERY,

INSCRIBED TO THE ROYAL BURROWS OF SCOTLAND.

THALIA, anes again, in blythsome lays,
 In lays immortal, chant the North Sea's praise :
 Tent how the Caledonians, lang supine,
 Begin, mair wife, to open baith their een ;
 And, as they ought, t' employ that store which
 Heav'n

In sic abundance to their hands has giv'n.
 Sae, th' heedless heir, born to a lairdship wide,
 That yields mair plenty than he kens to guide,
 Not well acquainted with his ain good luck,
 Lets ilka sneaking fellow take a pluck ;
 Till at the lang run, wi' a heart right fair,
 He sees the bites grow bein, as he grows bare ;
 Then, wak'ning, looks about with glegger glour,
 And learns to thrive, wha ne'er thought on 't
 before.

Nae

Nae nation in the warld can parallel
 The plenteous produet of this happy isle :
 But past'ral heights, and sweet prolific plains,
 That can at will command the fastest strains,
 Stand yont ; for Amphitrite * claims our sang,
 Wha round fair Thule † drives her finny thrang,
 O'er shaws of coral and the pearly sands,
 To Scotia's smoothest lochs and crystal strands.
 There keeps the tyrant pike his awfu' court,
 Here trouts and salmond in clear channels sport.
 Wae to that hand that dares by day or night
 Defile the stream where sporting fries delight ‡ .
 But herrings, lovely fish, like best to play
 In rowan ocean, or the open bay ;
 In crowds amazing thro' the waves they shine,
 Millions on millions form ilk equal line :
 Nor dares th' imperial whale, unless by stealth,
 Attack their firm united commonwealth.
 But artfu' nets, and fishers' wilie skill,
 Can bring the scaly nations to their will.

When

* The wife of Neptune.

† The northern islands of Scotland are said to be the Thule of the ancients.

‡ There are acts of parliament, which severely prohibit the steeping of lint in running waters, or any other way defiling those rivers where salmon abound.

When these retire to caverns of the deep,
Or in their oozy beds thro' winter sleep,
Then shall the tempting bait, and tented string,
Beguile the cod, the sea-cat, tusk, and ling.
Thus may our fishery thro' a' the year
Be still employ'd t' increase the public gear.

Delytfou labour ! where th' industrious gains
Profit surmounting ten times a' his pains :
Nae pleasure like success ; then lads stand bye,
Ye 'll find it endless in the northern sea.
O'er lang with empty brag we have been vain
Of toom dominion on the plenteous main,
While others ran away with all the gain.
Thus proud Iberia * vaunts of sov'reign sway
O'er countries rich, frae rise to set of day ;
She grasps the shadows, but the substance tines,
While a' the rest of Europe milk her mines.

But dawns the day sets Britain on her feet ;
Lang look'd-for 's come at last, and welcome be 't ;
For numerous fleets shall hem Aebudan † rocks ;
Commanding seas with rowth to raise our stocks :
Nor can this be a toom chimæra found,
The fabric 's bigget on the surest ground.

Sma'

* Spain.

† The Lewis and other western islands.

Sma' is our need to toil on foreign fhores,
 When we have baith the Indies at our doors :
 Yet, for diversion, laden vessels may
 To far aff nations cut the liquid way ;
 And fraught frae ilka port what 's nice or braw,
 While for their trifles we maintain them a'.
 Goths, Vandals, Gauls, Hesperians, and the
 Moors,
 Shall a' be treated frae our happy fhores :
 The rantin Germans, Ruffians, and the Poles,
 Shall feast with pleasure on our guffy shoals ;
 For which deep in their treasures we shall dive :
 Thus by fair trading north-sea stock shall thrive.

Sae far the bonny prospect gives delight,
 The warm ideas gart the muse take flight ;
 When strait a grumbletonian appears,
 Peching fou fair beneath a laid of fears :—
 “ Wow ! that's braw news,” quoth he, “ to make
 “ fools fain ;
 “ But gin ye be nae warlock, how d' ye ken ?
 “ Does Tam the Rhymer * spae oughtlings of this ?
 “ Or do ye prophesy just as ye wish ?
 “ Will

* Thomas Learmond, called the Rhymer, lived in the reign of Alexander III. king of Scots, and is held in great esteem by the vulgar for his dark predictions.

- “ Will projects thrive in this abandon'd place ?
“ Unsonfy we had ne'er fae meikle grace.
“ I fear, I fear, your tow'ring aim fa' short,
“ Alake we winn o'er far frae king and court !
“ The southernns will with pith your project
 “ bauk,
“ 'They 'll never thole this great design to tak.”

Thus do the dubious ever countermine,
With party wrangle, ilka fair design.
How can a faul that has the use of thought,
Be to sic little creeping fancies brought ?
Will Britain's king or parliament gainstand
The universal profit of the land ?
Now when nae sep'rate int'rest eggs to strife,
The ancient nations, join'd like man and wife,
Maun study clos for peace and thriving's sake,
Aff a' the wissen'd leaves of spite to shake.
Let 's weave and fish to ane anither's hands,
And never think wha serves or wha commands ;
But baith alike consult the common weal,
Happy that moment friendship makes us leal
To truth and right ; then springs a shining day,
Shall clouds of sma' mistakes drive fast away.
Mistakes and private int'rest hence be gane !
Mind what they did on dire Pharfalia's plain,
Where doughty Romans were by Romans flain.

A meaner

A meaner phantom neist, with meikle dread,
 Attacks with senseless fears the weaker head :—
 “ The Dutch,” say they, “ will strive your plot to
 “ flap,
 “ They’ll toom their banks before you reap their crop :
 “ Lang have they ply’d that trade like busy bees,
 “ And suck’d the profit of the Piëtland seas ;
 “ Thence riches fish’d mair, by themselves confest,
 “ Than e’er they made by Indies East and West.”

O mighty fine and greatly was it spoke !
 Maun bauld Britannia bear Batavia’s yoke ?
 May she not open her ain pantry-door,
 For fear the paughty state should gi’e a roar ?
 Dare she nane of her herrings sell or prive,
 Afore she say, “ Dear Matkie, wi’ ye’r leave ?”
 Curse on the wight wha tholes a thought fae tame !
 He merits not the manly Briton’s name.
 Grant they ’re good allies, yet it ’s hardly wise
 To buy their friendship at fae high a price :
 But frae that airth we needna fear great skaith,
 These people, right auldfarran, will be laith
 To thwart a nation, wha with ease can draw
 Up ilka sluice they have, and drown them a’.

Ah, slothfu’ pride ! a kingdom’s greatest curse ;
 How dowf looks gentry with an empty purse !
 How worthless is a poor and haughty drone,
 Wha thowless stands a lazy looker-on !

While active fauls a stagnant life despise,
 Still ravish'd with new pleasures as they rise.
 O'er lang, in troth, have we by-standers been,
 And loot fowk lick * the white out of our een :
 Nor can we wyt them, since they had our vote ;
 But now they 'se get the whistle of their groat.

Here did the muse intend a while to rest,
 Till hameo'er spitefu' din her lugs oppress ;
 Anither set of the envious kind
 (With narrow notions horribly confin'd)
 Wag their bofs noddles, fyne with silly spite
 Land ilka worthy project in a bite.
 They force with awkward girn their ridicule,
 And ca' ilk ane concern'd a simple fool,
 Excepting some wha a' the lave will nick,
 And gi'e them nought but bare whop-shafts to
 lick,

Malicious envy ! root of a' debates,
 The plague of government and bane of states ;
 The nurse of positive destructive strife,
 Fair friendship's fae, which sours the sweets of life ;
 Promoter of sedition and base feud,
 Still overjoy'd to see a nation bleed :—

Stap,

* This phrase is always applied when people, with pretence of friendship, do you an ill turn ; as one, licking a mote out of your eye, makes it blood-shot.

Stap, flap, my las * , forgetna where ye 're gawn,
 If ye rin on, Heav'n kens where ye may land ;
 Turn to your fishers' fang, and let fowk ken
 The north-sea skippers † are leal hearted men,
 Vers'd in the critic seasons of the year,
 When to ilk bay the fishing-bufs should steer,
 There to hawl up with joy the plenteous fry,
 Which on the decks in shining heaps shall lie,
 Till carefou hands, e'en while they 've vital heat ‡ ,
 Shall be employ'd to save their juices sweet ;
 Strick tent they 'll tak to stow them wi' strange
 brine § ,

In barrels tight, that shall nae liquor tine ;
 Then in the foreign markets we shall stand
 With upright front, and the first sale demand.
 This, this our faithfou trustees have in view,
 And honourably will the task pursue ;
 Nor are they bigging castles in a cloud,
 Their ships already into action scud ||.

Now,

* The muse.

† The managers.

‡ It is a great advantage to cure them immediately after they are taken.

§ Foreign salt.

|| Several large ships are already employed, and took in their salt and barrels a month ago.

Now, dear ill-natur'd billies, fay nae mair,
But leave the matter to their prudent care :
They 're men of candour, and right well they wate
That truth and honesty hads lang the gate * :
Shoulder to shoulder let 's stand firm and stout,
And there 's nae fear but we 'll soon make it out ;
We 've reason, law, and nature on our side,
And have nae bars, but party, sloth, and pride.

When a ' 's in order, as it soon will be,
And fleets of buffes fill the northern sea,
What hopefou images with joy arise
In order rank'd before the muse's eyes !
A wood of masts, well mann'd ; their jovial din,
Lik eydent bees gawn out and coming in :
Here haff a nation, healthfou wife, and stark,
With spirits only tint for want of wark,
Shall now find place their genius to exert,
While in the common good they act their part.
These fit for servitude shall bear a hand,
And these find government form'd for command.
Besides, this, as a nursery, shall breed
Stout skill'd marines, which Britain's navies need.
Pleas'd with their labour, when their task is done,
They 'll leave green Thetis to embrace the sun :
Then

* Holds long up its head ; longest keeps the highway or gate.

Then freshest fish shall on the brander bleez,
 And lend the busy browster wife a heez ;
 While healthfou hearts shall own their honest
 flame,
 With reaming quaff, and whomelt to her name,
 Whase active motion to his heart-did reach,
 As she the cods was turning on the beech *.
 Curs'd poortith ! love and hymen's deadly fae,
 (That gars young fowk in prime cry aft, " Oh hey !"
 And single live, till age and runcles shaw
 Their canker'd spirits good for nought at a'.)
 Now flit your camp, far frae our confines scour,
 Our lads and lasses soon shall slight your pow'r ;
 For rowth shall cherish love, and love shall bring
 Mae men t' improve the soil and serve the king.
 Thus universal plenty shall produce
 Strength to the state, and arts for joy and use.

O plenty ! thou delyt of great and sma',
 Thou nervous finnow of baith war and law !
 The statesman's drift, spur to the artist's skill ;
 Nor do the very flamens † like thee ill ;
 The shabby poets hate thee :—that 's a lie !
 Or else they are nae of a mind wi' me.

Plenty

* The beech is the sea-shore, where they dried the cod and ling.

† Priests.

Plenty shall cultivate ilk scawp and moor,
Now lea and bare, because the landlord 's poor.
On scroggy braes shall akes and ashes grow,
And bonny gardens clad the brecken how.
Do others backward dam the raging main *,
Raifing on barren sands a flow'ry plain ?
By us then shou'd the thought o' 't be endur'd,
To let braid tracts of land lie unmanur'd ?
Uncultivate nae mair they shall appear,
But shine with a' the beauties of the year ;
Which start with ease frae the obedient foil,
And ten times o'er reward a little toil.

Along wild shores, where tumbling billows
break,
Plenisht with nought but shells and tangle wreck,
Braw towns shall rise, with steeples mony a ane,
And houses bigget a' with estler stane ;
Where schools polite shall lib'ral arts display,
And make auld barb'rous darkness fly away.

Now Nereus rising frae his wat'ry bed,
The pearly drops hap down his lyart head ;
Oceanus with pleasure hears him sing,
Tritons and Nereids form a jovial ring,
And, dancing on the deep, attention draw,
While a' the winds in love, but fighting, blaw.

The

* The Dutch have gained a great deal from the sea.

The sea-born prophet sang, in sweetest strain,
“ Britons, be blyth ; fair queen of isles, be fain ;
“ A richer people never saw the fun.
“ Gang tightly throw what fairly you ’ve begun,
“ Spread a’ your sails and streamers in the wind,
“ For ilka pow’r in sea and air ’s your friend ;
“ Great Neptune’s unexhausted bank has store
“ Of endless wealth, will gar yours a’ run o’er.”
He sang fae loud, round rocks the echoes flew,
“ ’Tis true,” he said ; and they return’d, “ ’Tis
“ true.”

1715.

ON THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN,

APRIL 1715.

Now do I prefs among the lærn'd throng,
To tell a great eclipse in little fong.
At me nor fcheme nor demonftration afk,
That is our Gregory's * or fam'd Halley's † tafk ;
'Tis they who are converfant with each ftar,
We know how planets planets' rays debar ;
This to pretend, my mufe is not fo bold,
She only echoes what fhe has been told.

Our rolling globe ‡ will fcarce have made the fun
Seem half-way up Olympus to have run,
When night's pale queen, in her oft changed way,
Will intercept in direct line his ray,
And make black night ufurp the throne of day.
The curious will attend that hour with care,
And wifh no clouds may hover in the air,
To dark the medium, and obftruct from fight
The gradual motion and decay of light ;

Whilst

* Mr. Gregory, profeffor of mathematics in Edinburgh.

† Fellow of the Royal Society, London.

‡ According to the Copernican fyftem.

Whilst thoughtless fools will view the water-pail,
To see which of the planets will prevail ;
For then they think the sun and moon make war,
Thus nurses' tales oft-times the judgment mar.

When this strange darkness overshades the
 plains,
'Twill give an odd surprise t' unwarned swains ;
Plain honest hinds, who do not know the cause,
Nor know of orbs, their motions or their laws,
Will from the half-plough'd furrows homeward
 bend,
In dire confusion, judging that the end
Of time approacheth : thus possess'd with fear,
They 'll think the gen'ral conflagration near.
The traveller, benighted on the road,
Will turn devout, and supplicate his God.
Cocks with their careful mates and younger fry,
As if 't were ev'ning, to their roosts will fly.
The horned cattle will forget to feed,
And come home lowing from the grassy mead.
Each bird of day will to his nest repair,
And leave to bats and owls the dusky air :
The lark and little robin's softer lay
Will not be heard till the return of day.
Now this will be great part of Europe's case,
While Phebe 's as a mask on Phœbus' face.
The unlearn'd clowns, who don't our æra know,
From this dark Friday will their ages show ;

As

As I have often heard old country men
Talk of dark Monday, and their ages then.

Not long shall last this strange uncommon gloom,
When light dispels the ploughman's fear of doom;
With merry heart he'll lift his ravish'd sight
Up to the heav'ns, and welcome back the light.
How just 's the motions of these whirling spheres,
Which ne'er can err while time is met by years!
How vast is little man's capacious soul,
That knows how orbs thro' wilds of æther roll!
How great 's the pow'r of that omnific hand,
Who gave them motion by his wise command,
That they should not, while time had being, stand!

1715.

THE GENTLEMAN'S QUALIFICATIONS DEBATED *.

FROM different ways of thinking comes debate,
 This we despise, and that we over-rate,
 Just as the fancy takes, we love or hate :
 Hence Whig and Tory live in endless jar,
 And most of families in civil war :
 Hence, 'mongst the easiest men beneath the skies,
 E'en in their easy dome, debates arise :
 As late they did with strength of judgment scan
 Those qualities that form a gentleman.

First

* By some of the fellows of the Easy Club, a juvenile society of which I am a fellow. From the general antipathy we all seemed to have at the ill-humour and contradictions which arise from trifles, especially those which constitute Whig and Tory, without having the grand reason for it ; this engaged us to take a pleasure in the found of an Easy Club. The club, by one of our special laws, must not exceed twelve ; and every gentleman, at his admission, was to take the name of some Scots author, or one eminent for something extraordinary, for obscuring his real name in the register of our lucubrations ; such as are named in this debate, Tippermalloch, Buchanan, Hector Boece, &c.

First Tippermalloch pled, with Spanish grace,
That gentry only sprung from ancient race,
Whose names in old records of time were fix'd,
In whose rich veins some royal blood was mix'd.
I, being a poet sprung from a Douglas' loin,
In this proud thought did with the doctor join ;
With this addition, if they could speak sense,
Ambitious I, ah ! had no more pretence.
Buchanan, with stiff argument and bold,
Pled, gentry took its birth from powerful gold :
Him Hector Boece join'd ; they argu'd strong ;
Said they, " to wealth that title must belong ;
" If men are rich, they 're gentle ; and if not,
" You 'll own their birth and sense are soon
 " forgot.
" Pray say," said they, " how much respectful
 " grace
" Demands an old red coat and mangled face ?
" Or one, if he could like an angel preach,
" If he to no rich benefice can reach ?
" E'en progeny of dukes are at a stand
" How to make out bare gentry without land."
But still the doctor would not quit the field,
But that rich upstarts should to birth-right yield :
He grew more stiff, nor would the plea let go ;
Said he was right, and swore it should be so.

But happy we, who have such wholesome laws,
Which, without pleading, can decide a cause.

To

To this good law recourse we had at last,
That throws off wrath, and makes our friendship
fast ;
In which the legislators laid the plot
To end all controversy by a vote.

Yet that we more good-humour might display,
We frankly turn'd the vote another way :
As in each thing we common topics shun,
So the great prize nor birth nor riches won.
The vote was carried thus :—that easy he
Who should three years a social fellow be,
And to our Easy Club give no offence,
After triennial trial, should commence
A gentleman ; which gives as just a claim
To that great title, as the blast of fame
Can give to those, who tread in human gore,
Or those, who heap up hoards of coined ore ;
Since, in our social friendship, nought 's design'd
But what may raise and brighten up the mind ;
We aiming close to walk by virtue's rules,
To find true humour's self, and leave her shade
to fools.

1721.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

THE earth-born clod who hugs his idle pelf,
His only friends are Mammon and himself.
The drunken fots, who want the art to think,
Still cease from friendship when they cease from
drink.

The empty fop, who scarce for man will pass,
Ne'er sees a friend but when he views his glass.

Friendship first springs from sympathy of mind,
Which to complete the virtues all combine,
And only found 'mongst men who can espy
The merits of his friend without envy.
Thus all pretending friendship 's but a dream,
Whose base is not reciprocal esteem.

1721.

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS
TO THE TOWN-COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH.

YOUR poet humbly means and shaws,
That contrair to just rights and laws,
I've suffer'd muckle wrang,
By Lucky Reid * and ballad-fingers,
Wha thumb'd with their coarse dirty fingers
Sweet Adie's funeral fang;
They spoil'd my sense, and staw my cash,
My muse's pride murgully'd;
And printing it like their vile trash,
The honest lieges whilly'd.
Thus undone, to London †
It gade to my disgrace,
Sae pimpin and limpin,
In rags wi' bluther'd face.

Yet

* A printer's reliēt, who, with the hawkers, reprinted my pastoral on Mr. Addison, without my knowledge, on ugly paper, full of errors.

† One of their incorrect copies was reprinted at London by Bernard Lintot, in folio, before he printed it, a second time, from a correct copy of my own, with the Honourable Mr. Burchet's English version of it.

Yet gleg-eyed friends throw the disguise
Receiv'd it as a dainty prize,

For a' it was fae hav'ren.

Gart Lintot take it to his prefs,
And clead it in a braw new drefs,

Syne took it to the tavern.

But tho' it was made clean and braw,

Sae fair it had been knoited,

It blather'd buff * before them a',

And aftentimes turn'd doited.

It griev'd me, and reav'd me

Of kindly sleep and rest,

By carlings and gorling

To be fae fair opprest.

Wherefore to you, ne'er kend to guide ill,

But wisely had the good town's bridle,

My case I plainly tell ;

And, as your ain †, plead I may have

Your word of weight ‡, when now I crave

To guide my gear mysel.

Then

* Spoke nonsense, from words being wanting, and many wrong spelled and changed, such as *gras* for *gars*, *praise* for *phrase*, &c.

† A free citizen.

‡ To interpose their just authority in my favour, and grant me an act to ward off those little pirates ; of which act I gratefully acknowledge the receipt.

Then clean and fair the type shall be,
The paper like the snaw,
Nor shall our town think shame wi' me,
When we gang far awa.
What's wanted, if granted,
Beneath your honour'd wing,
Baith hantily and cantily
Your supplicant shall fing *.

* There being abundance of their petitioners who daily oblige themselves to pray.

1721.

THE PETITION TO THE WHIN-BUSH CLUB *.

OF Crawford-Moor, born in Leadhill †,
 Where min'ral springs Glengoner ‡ fill,
 Which joins sweet-flowing Clyde,
 Between auld Crawford-Lindsay's towers,
 And where Deneetne rapid pours
 His stream thro' Glotta's tide;
 Native of Clydesdale's upper ward,
 Bred fifteen summers there,
 Tho', to my loss, I am nae laird,
 By birth, my title 's fair;

To

* This club consists of Clydesdaleshire gentlemen, who frequently meet at a diverting hour, and keep up a good understanding amongst themselves over a friendly bottle. And, from a charitable principle, easily collect into their treasurer's box a small fund, which has many a time relieved the distresses of indigent persons of that shire.

† In the parish of Crawford-Moor, famous for the lead and gold mines belonging to the earl of Hoptoun.

‡ The name of a small river, which takes its rise from the Leadhills, and enters Clyde between the castle of Crawford and the mouth of Deneetne, another of the branches of Clyde.

To bend wi' ye, and spend wi' ye
An ev'ning, and gaffaw,
If merit and spirit
Be found without a flaw.
Since dously ye do nought at random,
Then take my bill to Avifandum ;
And if there 's nae objection,
I 'll deem 't my honour, and be glad,
To come beneath your Whin-bush shade,
And claim from it protection,
If frae the caverns of a head
That's bofs, a storm should blaw,
Etling wi' spite to rive my reed,
And give my muse a fa',
When poring and soaring
O'er Heliconian heights,
She traces these places
Where Cynthus delights.

SPOKEN TO JEOLUS,
IN THE HOUSE OF MARLEFIELD,
ON THE NIGHT OF A VIOLENT WIND.

WHY on this bow'r, bluff-cheeked god,
Sacred to Phœbus, and th' abode
Of Bennet *, his much-dauted son,
Say, wherefore makes thou all this din,
In dead of night ?—Heh ! like a kow,
To fuff at winnocks and cry Wow !—
I have it now,—Juno has seen
The fair Bennetas tread the green,
And them for bairns of Venus' guest,
Sae sends thee to disturb their rest.
Pray wauk your body, if you please,
Gae gowl and tooly on the seas ;
Thou wants the pith to do them harm ;
Within we 're safe, and snug, and warm,
Kindly refresh'd with healthfu' sleep,
While to my cod my pow I keep,
Canty and cosiely I lye,
And baith thy bursten cheeks defy.

* Sir William Bennet, who lived at Marlefield.

1721.

CLYDE'S WELCOME TO HIS PRINCE.

WHAT cheerful sounds from ev'ry side I hear!
 How beauteous on their banks my nymphs appear!
 Got thro' these massy mountains at my source,
 O'er rocks stupendous * of my upper course,
 To these fair plains where I more smoothly move,
 Throw verdant vales to meet Avona's † love.
 Yonder she comes beneath Dodonia's shade,
 How blyth she looks, how sweet and gaylie clade!
 Her flow'ry bounds bear all the pride of May,
 While round her soft meanders shepherds play.
 Hail, lovely Naid! to my bosom large,
 Amidst my stores, commit thy crystal charge,
 And speak these joys all thy deportment shews,
 That to old Ocean I may have good news.
 With solemn voice thus spoke majestic Clyde;
 In softer notes lov'd Avon thus reply'd:

Great Glotta! long have I had cause to mourn,
 While my forsaken stream gush'd from my urn;
Since

* The river falls over several high precipices, such as Corra's Lin, Stane-byre Lin, &c.

† The small river Avon, which joins the Clyde near Hamilton.

Since my late Lord, his nation's just delight,
Greatly lamented sunk in endless night.
His hopeful Stem, our chief desire and boast,
Expos'd to danger on some foreign coast,
Lonely for years I've murmur'd on my way,
When dark I wept, and sigh'd in shining day.

The fire return'd :—Just reasons for thy pains,
So long to wind thro' solitary plains ;
Thy loss was mine, I sympathiz'd with thee,
Since one our griefs, then share thy joys with me.

Then hear me, liquid chieftain of the dale,
Hush all your cat'raets till I tell my tale,
Then rise and roar, and kiss your bord'ring flowers,
And found our joys around yon lordly towers ;
Yon lordly towers, which happy now contain
Our brave and youthful Prince, return'd again.

Welcome ! in loudest raptures cry'd the flood ;
His welcome echo'd from each hill and wood :
Enough, Avona ; long may they contain
The noble youth, safely return'd again.
From the green mountain * where I lift my head,
With my twin-brothers, Annan and the Tweed,
To

* From the same hill the rivers Clyde, Tweed, and Annan have their rise ; yet run to three different seas, viz. the northern ocean, the German ocean, and the Irish sea.

To those high arches * where, as Culdees sing,
 The pious Mungo fish'd the trout and ring;
 My fairest nymphs shall on my margin play,
 And make e'en all the year one holiday:
 The sylvan powers and watches of each hight,
 Where fleecy flocks and climbing goats delight,
 Shall from their groves and rocky mountains roam,
 To join with us and sing his welcome home.
 With lofty notes we'll sound his high descent,
 His dawning merits, and heroic bent;
 Those early rays which steadfastly shall shine,
 And add new glories to his ancient line;
 A line aye loyal, and fir'd with gen'rous zeal,
 The bravest patrons of the commonweal:
 From him, who plung'd the sword (so muses sing†)
 Deep in his breast, who durst defame our king.

We

* The bridge of Glasgow; where, as it is reported, St. Mungo, the patron of that city, drew up a fish that brought him a ring which had been dropt: which miracle Glasgow retains the memory of in the city arms.

† Vide the ingenious Mr. Patrick Gordon's account of this illustrious family, in his poem on the valiant achievements of our great king Robert, surnamed the Bruce, chap. iv. beginning at this stanza, the prophet speaks to our monarch:

Now in thy time (quoth he) there shall arrive
 A worthy knight, that from his native land

Shall

We 'll fing the fire which in his bosom glows,
To warm his friends, and scorch his daring foes ;
Endow'd with all those sweet, yet manly charms,
As fit him for the fields of love or arms :
Fixt in an high and independent state,
Above to act what 's little, to be great.

Guard him, first Pow'r, whose hand directs the
 sun,
And teach him through dark caverns to run ;
Long may he on his own fair plains reside,
And flight my rival Thames, and love his Clyde.

Shall fly, because he bravely shall deprive,
 In glorious fight, a knight that shall withstand
Thy praises due, while he doth thee describe ;
 Yea, e'en this knight shall with victorious hand
Come here ; whose name his seed shall eternize,
And still thy virtuous line shall sympathize.

1721.

ON THE MARQUIS OF BOWMONT'S
CUTTING OFF HIS HAIR.

SHALL Berenice's tresses mount the skies,
And by the muse to shining fame arise?
Belinda's lock invite the smoothest lays
Of him whose merit claims the British bays?
And not, dear Bowmont, beautiful and young,
The graceful ringlets of thy head be sung?
How many tender hearts thine eyes hath pain'd!
How many fighting nymphs thy locks have chain'd!

The god of love beheld him with envy,
And on Cytherea's lap began to cry,
All drench'd in tears, "O mother! help your son,
"Else by a mortal rival I'm undone;
"With happy charms h'encroaches on my sway,
"His beauty disconcerts the plots I lay,
"When I've made Cloe her humble slave admire,
"Straight he appears and kindles new desire;
"She fights for him, and all my art beguiles,
"Whilst he, like me, commands and careless
"smiles.
"Ah me! those sable circles of his hair,
"Which wave around his beauties red and fair,
"I cannot

“ I cannot bear ! Adonis would seem dim,
“ With all his flaxen locks, if plac'd by him.”

Venus reply'd : “ No more, my dearest boy,
“ Shall those enchanting curls thy peace destroy ;
“ For ever sep'rate, they shall cease to grow
“ Or round his cheek, or on his shoulders flow :
“ I 'll use my flight, and make them quickly feel
“ Their honour's lost by the invading steel :
“ I 'll turn myself in shape of mode and health,
“ And gain upon his youthful mind by stealth ;
“ Three times the sun shall not have rous'd the
“ morn,
“ E'er he consent those from him shall be shorn.”

The promise she perform'd : but labour vain,
And still shall prove, while his bright eyes remain ;
And of revenge blind Cupid must despair,
As long 's the lovely sex are grac'd with hair ;
They 'll yield the conquering glories of their heads,
To form around his beauty easy shades ;
And in return, Thalia spies, and sings,
His lop'd-off locks shall sparkle in their rings.

1721.

TO SOME YOUNG LADIES,

Who were displeased with a Gentleman for telling them, that
condemnation to a state of virginity was the greatest of
punishments.

WHETHER condemn'd to virgin state,
By the superior powers,
Would to your sex prove cruel fate,
I 'm sure it would to ours.

From you the numerous nation spring,
Your breasts our being save,
Your beauties make the youthful sing,
And soothe the old and grave.

Alas! how soon would every wight
Despise both wit and arms;
To primitive old chaos night,
We 'd sink without your charms.

No more our breath would be our care,
Were love from us exil'd;
Sent back to Heaven with all the fair,
This world would turn a wild.

Regardless of these sacred ties,
Wife, husband, father, son,
All government we would despise,
And like wild tygers run.

Then, ladies pardon the mistake,
And with th' accus'd agree,
I beg it for each lover's sake,
Low bended on my knee :

And frankly wish what has been said,
By the audacious youth,
Might be your thought ; but I 'm afraid
It will not prove a truth :

For often, ah ! you make us groan,
By your too cold disdain ;
Then, quarrel with us when we moan,
And rave amidst our pain.

1721.

THE POET'S WISH.

FRAE great Apollo, poet say,
What is thy wish, what wadst thou hae,
 When thou bows at his shrine?
Not carse o' Gowrie's fertile field,
Nor a' the flocks the Grampians yield,
 That are baith fleek and fine:
Not costly things brought frae afar,
 As ivory, pearl, and gems;
Nor those fair straths that water'd are
 With Tay and Tweed's smooth streams,
 Which gently, and daintily,
 Pare down the flow'ry braes,
 As greatly, and quietly,
 They wimple to the seas.

Whaever by his canny fate
Is master of a good estate,
 That can ilk thing afford,
Let him enjoy 't withoutten care,
And with the wale of curious fare
 Cover his ample board.

Much dawted by the gods is he,
Wha to the Indian plain
Succesfu' ploughs the wally sea,
And safe returns again,
With riches, that hitches
Him high aboon the rest
Of sma' fowk, and a' fowk,
That are wi' poortith preft.

For me, I can be well content
To eat my bannock on the bent,
And kitchen 't wi' fresh air ;
Of lang-kail I can make a feast,
And cantily had up my crest,
And laugh at dishes rare.
Nought frae Apollo I demand,
But throw a lengthen'd life,
My outer fabric firm may stand,
And faul clear without strife.
May he then, but gie then,
Those blessings for my skair ;
I 'll fairly, and squairly,
Quite a', and seek nae mair.

1724.

HEALTH:

A POEM INSCRIBED TO THE EARL OF STAIR.

BE 't mine the honour once again to hear
And see the best of men for me appear ;
I 'll proudly chant : be dumb, ye vulgar throng !
Stair bids me sing ; to him these lays belong ;
If he approves, who can condemn my song ?

Of health I sing.—O health ! my portion be,
And to old age I 'll sing, if blest'd by thee.
Blessing divine ! Heaven's fairest gift to man !
Soul of his joys ! and length'ner of his span !
His span of life preserv'd with panting breath,
Without thy presence proves a ling'ring death.

The victor kings may cause wide nations bow,
And half a globe with conqu'ring force subdue ;
Bind princes to their axle-trees, and make
The wond'ring mob of staring mortals quake ;
Erect triumphal arches, and obtain
The loud huzza from thousands in their train :
But if her sweetness balmy health denies,
Without delight pillars or Æneids rise.

Cosmelius may on filky quilts repose,
And have a num'rous change of finest clothes ;
Box'd in his chair, he may be borne to dine
On ortolans, and sip fine Tokay wine :
His liver if an inflammation seize,
Or wasting lungs shall make him cough and
wheeze,
No more he smiles ; nor can his richest toys,
Or looking-glass, restore his wonted joys :
The rich brocade becomes a toilsome weight,
The brilliant gem offends his weakly sight ;
Perfumes grow nauseous then, nor can he bear
Loud tuneful notes that us'd to charm his ear :
To please his taste the cook attempts in vain,
When now each former pleasure gives him pain.

Nor flowing bowls, loud laugh, or midnight
freak,
Nor sinutty tale, delight the roving rake ;
When health forsakes him, all diversions tire ;
There's nothing pleases, nothing can inspire
A blythsome smile ; he shuns the shine of light,
And broken slumbers make a weary night.
If silent sleep attempt to bring him ease,
His watching fancy feels the whole disease :
He dreams a mountain lies upon his breast,
Or that he flies the fury of some beast :
Sees at vast distance, gushing from the rocks,
The cooling stream, while burning thirst provokes
Him,

Him, fainting, to climb up the craggy edge,
 And drag his limbs thro' many a thorny hedge ;
 Hangs o'er a precipice, or sinks in waves ;
 And all the while he sweats, turns, starts, and
 raves.

How mad 's that man, push'd by his passions wild,
 Who 's of his greatest happiness beguil'd ;
 Who seems, whate'er he says, by actions low,
 To court disease, our pleasure's greatest foe !

From Paris, deeply skill'd in nice ragoos,
 In oleos, salmagundies, and hogoes,
 Montanus sends for cooks, that his large board
 May all invented luxury afford :
 Health 's never minded, while the appetite
 Devours the spicy death with much delight.
 Meantime, king Arthur's fav'ry knighted loin
 Appears a clown, and 's not allow'd to join
 The marinated smelt, and sturgeon jowls,
 Soup-vermicell, fous'd turbot, cray, and foals,
 Fowls à-la-daub, and omelet of eggs,
 The smother'd coney, and bak'd paddocks legs,
 Pullets a bisk, and orangedo pye,
 The larded peacock, and the tarts de moy,
 The collar'd veal, and pike in cassorole,
 Pigs à-la-braise, the tanfy and brusole ;
 With many a hundred costly-mingled dish,
 Wherein the moiety of flesh or fish

Is wholly lost, and vitiate as the taste
Of them who eat the dangerous repast,
Until the feeble stomach's over-cramm'd,
The fibres weaken'd, and the blood inflam'd.
What aching heads, what spleen, and drowsy eyes,
From undigested crudities arise !
But when Montano's paunch is over-cloy'd,
The bagnio or emetic wine 's employ'd :
These he imagines methods the most sure,
After a surfeit, to complete a cure ;
But never dreams how much the balm of life
Is wasted by this forc'd unnat'ral strife.
Thus pewter vessels must by scouring wear,
While plate, more free from dross, continues clear.
Long unconsum'd the oak can bear the beams,
Or lye for ages firm beneath the streams ;
But when alternately the rain and rays
Now dash, then dry the plank, it soon decays.
Luxurious man ! altho' thou 'rt blest with wealth,
Why should thou use it to destroy thy health ?

Copy Mellantius, if you 'd learn the art
To feast your friends, and keep their souls alert ;
One good substantial British dish, or two,
Which sweetly in their natural juices flow,
Only appear : and here no danger 's found
To tempt the appetite beyond its bound ;
And you may eat, or not, as you incline ;
And, as you please, drink water, beer, or wine.

Here

Here hunger 's safe, and gratefully appeas'd,
The spleen 's forbid, and all the spirits rais'd,
And guests arise regal'd, refresh'd, and pleas'd.

Grumaldo views, from rais'd parterres around,
A thousand acres of fat furrow'd ground,
And all his own ; but these no pleasure yield,
While spleen hangs as a fog o'er ev'ry field :
The lovely landscape clad with gilded corn,
The banks and meads which flow'rs and groves
adorn,
No relish have ; his envious fullen mind,
Still on the fret, complains his fate 's unkind :
Something he wants which always flies his reach,
Which makes him groan beneath his spreading
beech.

When all of nature, silent, seem to shun
Their cares, and nod till the returning sun,
His envious thoughts forbid refreshing sleep,
And on the rack his hopeless wishes keep :
Fatigu'd and drumbly from the down he flies,
With skinny cheek, pale lips, and blood-run eyes.
Thus toil'd with lab'ring thoughts, he looks aghast,
And tasteless loaths the nourishing repast :
Meagre disease an easy passage finds,
Where joy 's debarr'd, in such corroded minds.
Such take no care the springs of life to save,
Neglect their health, and quickly fill a grave.

Unlike

Unlike gay Myrtil, who, with cheerful air,
 Less envious, tho' less rich, no slave to care,
 Thinks what he has enough, and scorns to fret,
 While he sees thousands less oblig'd to fate,
 And oft'ner from his station casts his eye
 On those below him, than on those more high :
 Thus envy finds no access to his breast,
 To sour his gen'rous joy, or break his rest.
 He studies to do actions just and kind,
 Which with the best reflections cheer the mind ;
 Which is the first preservative of health,
 To be preferr'd to grandeur, pride, and wealth.
 Let all who would pretend to common sense,
 'Gainst pride and envy still be on defence ;
 Who love their health, nor would their joys con-
 trol,
 Let them ne'er nurse such furies in their soul.

Nor, wait on strolling Phimos to the stews,
 Phimos, who by his livid colour shews
 Him laden with vile diseases, which are fixt
 Upon his bones, and with his vitals mixt.
 Does that man wear the image of his God,
 Who drives to death on such an ugly road ?
 Behold him clad like any bright bridegroom,
 In richest labours of the British loom ;
 Embroider'd o'er with gold, whilst lace, or lawn,
 Waves down his breast, and ruffles o'er his
 han',

Set

Set off with art, while vilely he employs
In sinks of death, for low dear-purchas'd joys :
He grasps the blasted shadows of the fair,
Whose sickly look, vile breath, and falling hair,
The flagg'd embrace, and mercenary squeeze,
The tangs of guilt, and terrors of disease,
Might warn him to beware, if wild desire
Had not set all his thoughtless soul on fire.
O poor mistaken youth ! to drain thy purse,
To gain the most malignant human curse !
Think on thy flannel, and mercurial dose,
And future pains, to save thy nerve and nose :
Think, heedless wight ! how thy infected veins
May plague thee many a day with loathsome pains,
When the French foe his woeful way has made,
And all within his dire detachments laid ;
There long may lurk, and, with destruction keen,
Do horrid havock ere the symptom 's seen,
But learn to dread the poisonous disease,
When heaviness and spleen thy spirits seize ;
When feeble limbs to serve thee will decline,
And languid eyes no more with sparkles shine ;
The roses from thy cheek will blasted fade,
And leave a dull complexion like the lead :
Then, then expect the terrible attack
Upon thy head, thy conduit, nose, and back ;
Pains thro' thy shoulders, arms, and throat, and
 skins,
Will threaten death, and damp thee with thy sins.

How

How frightful is the loss, and the disgrace,
When it destroys the beauties of the face !
When the arch nose in rotten ruin lies,
And all the venom flames around the eyes ;
When th' uvula has got its mortal wound,
And tongue and lips form words without a sound ;
When hair drops off, and bones corrupt and
bare,
Through ulcerated tags of muscles stare !

But vain we sing instruction to his ear,
Who 's no more slave to reason than to fear ;
Hurried by passion, and o'ercome with wine,
He rushes headlong on his vile design :
The nauseous bolus, and the bitter pill,
A month of spitting, and the surgeon's bill,
Are now forgot, whilst he—but here 'tis best
To let the curtain drop, and hide the rest
Of the coarse scene, too shocking for the sight
Of modest eyes and ears, that take delight
To hear with pleasure Urban's praises sung,
Urban the kind, the prudent, gay, and young ;
Who moves a man, and wears a rosy smile,
That can the fairest of a heart beguile :
A virtuous love delights him with its grace,
Which soon he 'll find in Myra's lov'd embrace,
Enjoying health, with all its lovely train
Of joys, free from remorse, or shame, or pain.

But

But Talpo fights with matrimonial cares,
 His cheeks wear wrinkles, silver grow his hairs,
 Before old age his health decays apace,
 And very rarely smiles clear up his face.
 Talpo 's a fool, there 's hardly help for that,
 He scarcely knows himself what he 'd be at ;
 He 's avaricious to the last degree,
 And thinks his wife and children make too free
 With his dear idol ; this creates his pain,
 And breeds convulsions in his narrow brain.
 He always startled at approaching fate,
 And often jealous of his virtuous mate ;
 Is ever anxious, shuns his friends to save :
 Thus soon he 'll fret himself into a grave ;
 There let him rot, worthless the muse's lays,
 Who never read one poem in his days.

I sing to Marlus, Marlus who regards
 The well-meant verse, and gen'rously rewards
 The poet's care. Observe now, if you can,
 Aught in his carriage does not speak the man :
 To him his many a winter wedded wife
 Appears the greatest solace of his life.
 He views his offspring with indulgent love,
 Who his superior conduct all approve.
 Smooth glide his hours ; at fifty he 's less old
 Than some who have not half the number told.
 The cheering glass he with right friends can share,
 But shuns the deep debauch with cautious care.

His

His sleeps are sound, he fees the morning rise,
And lifts his face with pleasure to the skies,
And quaffs the health that 's borne on Zephyr's
wings,

Or gushes from the rock in limpid springs.
From fragrant plains he gains the cheering smell,
While ruddy beams all distant dumps repel.
'The whole of nature, to a mind thus turn'd,
Enjoying health, with sweetness seems adorn'd :
To him the whistling ploughman's artless tune,
The bleating flocks, the oxen's hollow crune,
The warbling notes of the small chirping throng,
Give more delight than the Italian song.
To him the cheapest dish of rural fare,
And water cool in place of wine more rare,
Shall prove a feast : on straw he 'll find more ease,
Than on the down even with the least disease.

Whoever 's tempted to transgress the line,
By moderation fix'd to enliv'ning wine,
View Macro, wasted long before his time,
Whose head, bow'd down, proclaims his liquid
crime.

The purple dye, with ruby pimples mixt,
As witnesses upon his face are fixt.
A constant fever wastes his strength away,
And limbs enervate gradually decay ;
'The gout, and palsy, follow in the rear,
And make his being burdensome to bear :

His

His squeamish stomach loaths the favoury fey *,
And nought but liquids now can find their way,
To animate his strength, which daily flies,
Till the young drunkard's past all hope, and dies.

To practise what we preach, O goddess-born !
Assist thy slave, lest Bacchanalians scorn
Thy inspiration, if the tempting grape
Shall form the hollow eye and idiot gape.

But let no wretched misers, who repine,
And wish there were not such a juice as wine,
Imagine here that we are so profane
To think that Heav'n gave plenteous vines in vain:
No; since there's plenty, cups may sparkling flow,
And we may drink till our rais'd spirits glow;
They will befriend our health, while cheerful
 rounds
Incline to mirth, and keep their proper bounds.
Fools should not drink, I own, who still wish more,
And know not when 'tis proper to give o'er.
Dear Britons, let no morning-drinks deceive
Your appetites, which else at noon would crave
Such proper aliments as can support,
At even your hearty bottle, health and sport.

Next

* The sirloin of beef.

Next view we sloth, (too oft the child of
wealth,)

A seeming friend, but real foe to health.
Lethargus lolls his lazy hours away,
His eyes are drowsy, and his lips are blue ;
His soft enfeebled hands supinely hang,
And shaking knees, unus'd, together cling :
Close by the fire his easy chair too stands,
In which all day he snotters, nods, and yawns.
Sometimes he'll drone at piquet, hoping gain,
But you must deal his cards, that's too much pain.
He speaks but seldom, puffs at ev'ry pause,
Words being a labour to his tongue and jaws :
Nor must his friends discourse above their breath,
For the least noise stounds thro' his ears like death.
He causes stop each cranny in his room,
And heaps on clothes, to save him from the
rheum :

Free air he dreads as his most dangerous foe,
And trembles at the sight of ice or snow.
The warming-pan each night glows o'er his sheets,
Then he beneath a load of blankets sweats ;
The which, instead of shutting, opens the door,
And lets in cold at each dilated pore.
Thus does the sluggish health and vigour waste,
With heavy indolence, till at the last,
Sciatic, jaundice, dropsy, or the stone,
Alternate makes the lazy lubbard groan.

But

But active Hilaris much rather loves,
 With eager stride, to trace the wilds and groves ;
 To start the covey, or the bounding roe,
 Or work destructive Reynard's overthrow :
 The race delights him, horses are his care,
 And a stout ambling pad his easiest chair.
 Sometimes, to firm his nerves, he 'll plunge the
 deep,
 And with expanded arms the billows sweep :
 Then on the links, or in the estler walls,
 He drives the gowff, or strikes the tennis-balls.
 From ice with pleasure he can brush the snow,
 And run rejoicing with his curling throw ;
 Or send the whizzing arrow from the string,
 A manly game *, which by itself I sing.
 Thus cheerfully he 'll walk, ride, dance, or game,
 Nor mind the northern blast, or southern flame.
 East winds may blow, and sudden fogs may fall,
 But his hale constitution's proof to all.
 He knows no change of weather by a corn,
 Nor minds the black, the blue, or ruddy morn.

Here let no youth, extravagantly given,
 Who values neither gold, nor health, nor Heaven,
 Think that our song encourages the crime
 Of setting deep, or wasting too much time

On

* A poem on seeing the archers playing at the Rovers.

On furious game, which makes the passions boil,
And the fair mean of health a weak'ning toil,
By violence excessive, or the pain,
Which ruin'd losers ever must sustain.

Our Hilaris despises wealth so won,
Nor does he love to be himself undone ;
But from his sport can with a smile retire,
And warm his genius at Apollo's fire ;
Find useful learning in th' inspired strains,
And bless the gen'rous poet for his pains.
Thus he by lit'rature and exercise
Improves his soul, and wards off each disease.

Health's op'ner foes we've taken care to shew,
Which make diseases in full torrents flow :
But when these ills intrude, do what we will,
Then hope for health from Clerk's * approved
skill ;
To such, well seen in nature's darker laws,
That for disorders can assign a cause ;
Who know the virtues of salubrious plants,
And what each different constitution wants,
Apply for health.—But shun the vagrant quack,
Who gulls the crowd with Andrew's comic
clack :

Or

* Dr. Clerk of Edinburgh, a physician of great ability, and a pupil of Pitcairne.

Or him that charges gazettes with his bills,
 His anodynes, elixirs, tinctures, pills,
 Who rarely ever cures, but often kills.
 Nor trust thy life to the old woman's charms,
 Who binds with knotted tape thy legs or arms,
 Which they pretend will purple fevers cool,
 And thus impose on some believing fool.
 When agues shake, or fevers raise a flame,
 Let your physician be a man of fame,
 Of well-known learning, and in good respect
 For prudence, honour, and a mind erect :
 Nor scruply save from what's to merit due ;
 He saves your whole estate who succours you.

Be grateful, Britons, for your temp'rate beams,
 Your fertile plains, green hills, and silver streams,
 O'erclad with corn, with groves, and many a mead,
 Where rise green heights, where herds in millions
 feed :
 Here useful plenty mitigates our care,
 And health with freshest sweets embalms the air.

Upon those shores, where months of circling rays
 Glance feebly on the snow, and frozen bays ;
 Where, wrapt in fur, the starving Lapland brood
 Scarce keep the cold from curdling of their blood ;
 Here meagre want in all its pinching forms,
 Combin'd with lengthen'd night and bleakest
 storms,

To combat joyful health and calm repose,
Which from an equal warmth and plenty flows.

Yet rather, O great Ruler of the day !
Bear me to Weygate, or to Hudson's Bay,
Than scorch me on those dry and blasted plains,
Where rays direct inflame the boiling veins
Of gloomy negroes, who 're oblig'd to breathe
A thicken'd air, with pestilential death ;
Where range out o'er th' inhospitable wastes,
The hunger-edg'd and fierce devouring beasts ;
Where serpents crawl which fure destruction bring,
Or in th' envenom'd tooth or forked fling ;
Where fleeting sands ne'er yield t' industrious toil,
The golden sheaf, or plants for wine and oil :
Health must be here a stranger, where the rage
Of fev'rish beams forbids a lengthen'd age.

Ye Dutch ! enjoy your dams, your bulwarks
boast,
And war with Neptune for a sandy coast,
Whilst frightened by these deep tumultuous powers,
You scarce dare sleep in your subaqueous bowers :
Raise high your beds, and shun your croaking
frogs,
And battle with tobacco-smoke your fogs ;
Soak on your stoves, with spirits charge your
veins,
To ward off agues and rheumatic pains.

Let the proud Spaniard strut on naked hills,
And vainly trace the plain for crystal rills.
Starve on a fallad or a garlic head,
Pray for his daily roots, not daily bread ;
Be sour, and jealous of his friend and wife,
Till want and spleen cut short his thread of life.

Whilst we on our auspicious island find
Whate'er can please the sense or cheer the mind.
Blest queen of isles ! with a devout regard,
Allow me to kneel down and kiss thy sword,
Thy flow'ry sword, and offer Heav'n a vow,
Which gratitude and love to thee make due ;
If e'er I from thy healthful limits stray,
Or by a wish, or word, a thought betray
Against thy int'rest or thy fair renown,
May never Daphne furnish me a crown ;
Nor may the first-rate judges of our isle
Or read, or on my blythsome numbers smile.

Thalia here, sweet as the light, retir'd,
Commanding me to sing what she 'd inspir'd,
And never mind the glooming critics bray :
The song was her's—she spoke—and I obey.

AN ODE

ON THE BIRTH OF THE MARQUIS OF DRUMLANRIG.

HELP me, some god, with sic a muse
As Pope and Granville aft employ,
That I may flowing numbers chuse,
To hail the welcome princely boy.

But, bred up far frae shining courts,
In moorland glens, where nought I see,
But now and then some landart las,
What sounds polite can flow frae me?

Yet, my blyth las, amang the lave,
With honest heart her homage pays ;
Tho' no fae nice she can behave,
Yet always as she thinks she says.

Arise, ye nymphs, on Nitha's plains,
And gar the craigs and mountains ring ;
Rouse up the fauls of a' the swains,
While you the lovely infant sing.

Keep halyday on ilka howm,
With gowan garlands gird your brows ;
Out o'er the dales in dances roam,
And shout around the jovial news.

By

By the good bennifon of Heav'n,
To free you frae the future fright
Of foreign lords, a babe is given
To guard your int'rest and your right.

With pleasure view your prince, who late
Up to the state of manhood run,
Now, to complete his happy fate,
Sees his ain image in a son.

A son, for whom be this your pray'r,
Ilk morning foon as dawn appears ;
God grant him an unmeasur'd skair
Of a' that grac'd his great forbeers :

That his great fire may live to see
Frae his delightfu' infant spring
A wife and stalwart progeny,
To fence their country and their king.

Still blefs her Grace frae whom he sprung,
With blythsome heal her strength renew,
That throw lang life she may be young,
And bring forth cautioners enow.

Watch well, ye tenants of the air,
Wha hover round our heads unseen,
Let dear Drumlanrig be your care,
Or when he lifts or steeks his een.

Ye hardy heroes, whase brave pains
Defeated ay th' invading rout,
Forsake a wee th' Elysian plains,
View, smile, and blefs your lovely sprout.

Ye fair, wha 've ken'd the joys of love,
And glow with chearfu' heal and youth,
Sic as of auld might nurse a Jove,
Or lay the breast t' Alcides' mouth ;

The best and bonniest of ye a'
Take the sweet babie in your arms :
May he nought frae your bosom draw,
But nectar to nurse up his charms.

Harmoniously the notes exprefs,
When singing you his dumps debar,
That discord never may impress
Upon his blooming mind a jar.

Sound a' the poet in his ears,
E'en while he's hanging at the breast :
Thus moulded, when he comes to years,
With an exalted gust he'll feast

On lays immortal, which forbid
The death of Douglas' doughty name ;
Or in oblivion let lie hid
The Hydes, their beauty and their fame.

1728.

AN ODE

TO GRACE, COUNTESS OF ABOYNE,

ON HER MARRIAGE-DAY.

IN martial fields the hero toils,
And wades throw blood to purchase fame ;
O'er dreadful waves, from distant foils,
The merchant brings his treasures hame.

But fame and wealth no joys bestow,
If plac'd alane the cyphers stand ;
'Tis to the figure Love they owe
The real joys that they command.

Blest he who love and beauty gains,
Gains what contesting kings might claim,
Might bring brave armies to the plains,
And loudly swell the blast of fame.

How happy then is young Aboyne !
Of how much heav'n is he possest !
How much the care of pow'rs divine,
Who lies in lovely Lockhart's breast !

Gazing

Gazing in raptures on thy charms,
Thy sparkling beauty, shape, and youth,
He grasps all softness in his arms,
And sips the nectar from thy mouth.

If sympathetic likenesses crave
Indulgent parents to be kind,
Each pow'r shall guard the charm they gave,
Venus thy face, Pallas thy mind.

O muse ! we could—but stay thy flight ;
The field is sacred as 'tis sweet :
Who dares to paint the ardent night,
When ravish'd youth and beauty meet ?

Here we must draw a veil between,
And shade those joys too dazzling clear,
By ev'ry eye not to be seen,
Not to be heard by ev'ry ear.

Still in her smiles, ye Cupids, play ;
Still in her eyes your revels keep ;
Her pleasure be your care by day,
And whisper sweetness in her sleep.

Be banish'd each ill-natur'd care,
Base offspring of fantastic spleen ;
Of access here you must despair,
Her breast for you is too serene.

May guardian angels hover round
Thy head, and ward off all annoy,
Be all thy days with raptures crown'd,
And all thy nights be blest with joy.

AN ODE

*ON THE MARRIAGE OF ALEX. BRODIE OF BRODIE,**TO MISS MARY SLEIGH.*

WHEN time was young, and innocence
With tender love govern'd this round,
No mean design to give offence
To constancy and truth was found :
All free from fraud, upon the flow'ry fward,
Lovers carest with fond and chaste regard.

From easy labours of the day,
Each pair to leafy bowers retir'd ;
Contentment kept them ever gay,
While kind connubial sweets conspir'd,
With smiling quiet and balmy health, thro' life
To make the happy husband and the wife.

Our modern wits, in wisdom less,
With spirits weak, and wavering minds,
Void of resolve, poorly confess
They cannot relish aught that binds.
Let libertines of taste fae wond'rous nice,
Despise to be confin'd in paradise.

While

While Brodie with his beauteous Sleigh,
 On purest love can safely feast,
 Quaff raptures from her sparkling eye,
 And judge of heav'n within her breast :
 No dubious cloud to gloom upon his joy,
 Possessing of what's good can never cloy.

Her beauty might for ever warm,
 Altho' her soul were less divine ;
 The brightness of her mind could charm,
 Did less her graceful beauties shine :
 But both united, with full force inspire
 The warmest wish, and the most lasting fire.

In your accomplish'd mate, young thane,
 Without reserve ye may rejoice ;
 The Heav'ns your happiness sustain,
 And all that think admire your choice.
 Around your treasure circling arms entwine,
 Be all thy pleasure her's, and her's be thine.

Rejoice, dear Mary, in thy youth,
 The first of his brave ancient clan,
 Whose soul delights in love and truth,
 And view'd in every light a man
 To whom the fates with liberal hand have given
 Good sense, true honour, and a temper even.

When

When love and reason thus unite
An equal pair in sacred ties,
They gain the human bliss complete,
And approbation from the skies :
Since you approve, kind Heaven, upon them pour
The best of blessings to their latest hour.

To you who rule above the sun,
To you who fly in fluid air,
We leave to finish what 's begun,
Still to reward and watch the pair.
Thus far the muse, who did an answer wait,
And heard the gods name happiness their fate.

1723.

THE FAIR ASSEMBLY,

A POEM.

TO THE MANAGERS.

Right Honourable Ladies,

How much is our whole nation indebted to your Ladyships for your reasonable and laudable undertaking to introduce politeness among us, by a cheerful entertainment, which is highly for the advantage of both body and mind, in all that is becoming in the brave and beautiful; well foreseeing that a barbarous rusticity ill suits them, who, in fuller years, must act with an address superior to the common class of mankind; and it is undeniable, that nothing pleases more, nor commands more respect, than an easy, disengaged, and genteel manner. What can be more disagreeable than to see one, with a stupid impudence, saying and acting things the most shocking amongst the polite; or others (in plain Scots) blate, and not knowing how to behave.

Warmed with these reflections, and the beautifulness of the subject, my thoughts have made their way in the following Itanzas, which, with humility, I beg leave to present to your Ladyships.—It is amazing to imagine, that any are so destitute of good sense and manners as to drop the least unfavourable sentiment against the Fair Assembly. It is to be owned, with regret, that the best of things have been abused. The church has been, and in many countries is, the chief place for affignations that are not warrantable: wine, one of Heaven's
kindly

kindly blessings, may be used to one's hurt : the beauty of the fair, which is the great preserver of harmony and society, has been the ruin of many : learning, which assists in raising the mind of man up to the class of spirits, has given many a one's brain a wrong cast : so places, designed for healthful and manly dancing, have, by people of an unhappy turn, been debauched by introducing gaming, drunkenness, and indecent familiarities. But will any argue from these, that we must have no churches, no wine, no beauties, no literature, no dancing ?—Forbid it Heaven ! Noble and worthy Ladies, whatever is under your auspicious conduct must be improving and beneficial in every respect. May all the fair daughters copy after such virtuous and delightful patterns, as you have been, and continue to be. That you may be long a blessing to the rising generation, is the sincere prayer of,

May it please your Ladyships,

Your most faithful and humble servant,

EDIN. June 28th.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

AWAKE, Thalia, and defend,
 With cheerfu' caroling,
 Thy bonny care : thy wings extend,
 And bear me to your spring,
 That harmony full force may lend
 To reasons that I bring :—
 Now Caledonian nymphs attend,
 For 'tis to you I sing.

As lang as minds maun organs wear
 Compos'd of flesh and blood,
 We ought to keep them hale and clear,
 With exercise * and food.
 Then, but debate, it will appear,
 That dancing must be good ;
 It stagnant humours sets a-steer,
 And fines the purple blood.

Diseases, heaviness, and spleen,
 And ill things mony mae,
 That gar the lazy fret and grane,
 With visage dull and blae.
 'Tis dancing can do mair alane,
 Than drugs frae far away,
 To ward aff these, make nightly pain,
 And sour the shining day.

Health is a prize—yet meikle mair
 In dancing we may find ;
 It adds a lustre to the fair,
 And, when the fates unkind

Cloud

* The wife for health on exercise depend ;
 God never made his works for man to mend.

DRYDEN.

Cloud with a blate and aukward air
 A genius right refin'd,
 The sprightly art * helps to repair
 This blemish on the mind.

How mony do we daily see
 Right scrimp of wit and sense †,
 Who gain their aims aft easily
 By well-bred confidence?
 Then, whate'er helps to qualifie
 A rustic negligence
 Maun without doubt a duty be,
 And should give nae offence.

Hell's

* Since nothing appears to me to give children so much becoming confidence and behaviour, and so raise them to the conversation of those above their age, as dancing, I think they should be taught to dance as soon as they are capable of learning it: for though this consists only in outward gracefulness of motion, yet, I know not how, it gives manly thoughts and carriage more than any thing. LOCKE.

† It is certain, that for want of a competent knowledge in this art of dancing, which should have been learned when young, the public loses many a man of excellent intellectuals and unbiassed probity, purely for want of that so necessary accomplishment, assurance; while the pressing knave or fool shoulders him out, and gets the prize. MR. WEAVER.

Hell's doctrine 's dung, when equal pairs
 Together join their hands,
 And vow to soothe ilk other's cares,
 In haly wedlock's bands :
 Sae when to dance the maid prepares,
 And flush'd with sweetness stands,
 At her the wounded lover stares,
 And yields to Heaven's commands.

The first command * he soon obeys,
 While love inspires ilk notion ;
 His wishing look his heart displays,
 While his lov'd mate 's in motion :
 He views her with a blyth amaze,
 And drinks with deep devotion
 That happy draught, that thro' our days
 Is own'd a cordial potion.

The cordial which conserves our life,
 And makes it smooth and easy ;
 Then, ilka wanter wale a wife,
 Ere eild and humdrums seize ye,
 Whase charms can silence dumps or strife,
 And frae the rake release ye,
 Attend th' Affembly, where there 's rife
 Of virtuous maids to please ye.

These

* Dixit eis Deus, fœtificate, augefcite, et implete terram.

These modest maids inspire the muse,
In flowing strains to shaw
Their beauties, which she likes to roose,
And let th' envious blaw :
That task she canna well refuse,
Wha singe lays them na—
To paint Belinda first we chuse,
With breasts like driven snaw.

Like lily-banks see how they rise,
With a fair glen between,
Where living streams, blue as the skies,
Are branching upward seen,
To warm her mouth, where rapture lies,
And smiles that banish spleen,
Wha strikes with love and fast surprise,
Where'er she turns her een.

Sabella, gracefully complete,
Straight as the mountain-pine,
Like pearl and rubies set in jet,
Her lovely features shine :
In her the gay and solid meet,
And blended are fae fine,
That when she moves her lips or feet,
She seems some power divine.

O Daphne !

O Daphne ! sweeter than the dawn,
 When rays glance o'er the height,
 Diffusing gladness o'er the lawn,
 With streaks of rising light.
 The dewy flowers, when newly blawn,
 Come short of that delight
 Which thy far fresher beauties can
 Afford our joyfu' fight.

How easy fits sweet Celia's dress !
 Her gait how gently free !
 Her steps throughout the dance express
 The justest harmony :
 And when she sings, all must confess,
 Wha 're blest to hear and see,
 They 'd deem 't their greatest happiness
 T' enjoy her company.

And wha can ca' his heart his ain,
 'That hears Aminta speak ?
 Against Love's arrows shields are vain,
 When he aims frae her cheek ;
 Her cheek, where roses free from stain,
 In glows of youdith beek :
 Unmingled sweets her lips retain,
 These lips she ne'er should steek.

Unless when fervent kisses close
That av'nue of her mind,
Thro' which true wit in torrents flows,
As speaks the nymph design'd,
The brag and toast of wits and beaux,
And wonder of mankind ;
Whase breast will prove a blest repose,
To him with whom she 'll bind.

See, with what gaiety, yet grave,
Serena swims along ;
She moves a goddess 'mang the lave,
Distinguish'd in the thrang.
Ye fourrocks, hafflines fool, haf knave !
Wha hate a dance or sang,
To see this stately maid behave,
'T wad gi'e your hearts a twang :

Your hearts, said I ?—troth I 'm to blame ;
I had amais't forgotten,
That ye to nae sic organ claim,
Or if ye do, 't is rotten :
A faul with sic a thowless flame,
Is sure a filly sot ane ;
Ye scandalise the human frame,
When in our shape begotten.

These

These lurdanes came just in my light,
As I was tenting Chloe,
With jet-black een that sparkle bright,
She 's all o'er form'd for joy ;
With neck, and waist, and limbs as tight
As her's wha drew the boy
Frae feeding flocks upon the height,
And fled with him to Troy.

Now Myra dances :—mark her mein,
Sae difengag'd and gay,
Mix'd with that innocence that 's seen,
In bonny ew-bught May,
Wha wins the garland on the green,
Upon some bridal day ;
Yet she has graces for a queen,
And might a sceptre sway.

What lays, Calista, can commend
The beauties of thy face ?
Whase fancy can sae tow'ring stend,
Thy merits a' to trace ?
Frae boon the starns, some bard, descend,
And sing her ev'ry grace,
Whase wond'rous worth may recommend
Her to a god's embrace.

A seraph wad our Aikman paint,
Or draw a lively wit ?
The features of a happy faint,
Say, art thou fond to hit ?
Or a madona compliment,
With lineaments maist fit ?
Fair copies thou need'ft never want,
If bright Calista fit.

Mella the heaviest heart can heeze,
And fourest thoughts expel,
Her station grants her rowth and ease,
Yet is the sprightly belle
As active as the eydent bees,
Wha rear the waxen cell ;
And place her in what light you please,
She still appears herself.

Beauties on beauties come in view
Sae thick, that I 'm afraid
I shall not pay to ilk their due,
Till Phœbus lend mair aid :
But this in gen'ral will had true,
And may be safely said,
There 's ay a something shining new
In ilk delicious maid.

Sic as against th' Assembly speak,
The rudest fauls betray,
When matrons, noble, wise, and meek,
Conduct the healthfu' play :
Where they appear, nae vice dare keek,
But to what 's good gives way,
Like night, soon as the morning creek
Has usher'd in the day.

Dear Ed'nburgh shaw thy gratitude,
And of sic friends make sure,
Wha strive to mak our minds less rude,
And help our wants to cure ;
Acting a gen'rous part and good,
In bounty to the poor ;
Sic virtues, if right understood,
Should ev'ry heart allure.

ON THE ROYAL ARCHERS'

SHOOTING FOR THE BOWL,

The 6th of July 1724.

AGAIN the year returns the day,
That 's dedicat to joy and play,
 To bonnets, bows, and wine.
Let all who wear a fullen face,
This day meet with a due disgrace,
 And in their founes pine ;
Be shunn'd as serpents that wad stang
 The hand that gies them food :
Sic we debar frae lastng fang,
 And all their grumblng brood.

While to gain sport and halefome air,
The blythfome spirit draps dull care,
 And starts frae bus'ness free :
Now to the fields the Archers bend,
With friendly minds the day to spend,
 In manly game and glee ;
First striving wha shall win the bowl,
 And then gar 't flow with wine :
Sic manly sport refresh'd the soul
 Of stalwart men lang syne.

Ere

Ere parties thrawn, and int'rest vile,
Debauch'd the grandeur of our isle,
And made e'en brethren faes :
Syne truth frae friendship was exil'd,
And fause the honest hearts beguil'd,
And led them in a maze
Of politics.—With cunning craft,
The Iffachars of state,
Frae haly drums first dang us daft,
Then drown'd us in debate.

Drap this unpleasing thought, dear muse ;
Come view the men thou likes to roose ;
To Bruntsfield-green let 's hie,
And see the royal Bowmen strive,
Wha far the feather'd arrows drive,
All foughing thro' the sky :
Ilk etling with his utmost skill,
With artfu' draft and stark,
Extending nerves with hearty will,
In hopes to hit the mark.

See Hamilton, wha moves with grace,
Chief of the Caledonian race
Of peers, to whom is due
All honours, and a fair renown ;
Wha lays aside his ducal crown,
Sometimes to shade his brow

Beneath

Beneath St. Andrew's bonnet blue,
And joins to gain the prize ;
Which shaws true merit match'd by few,
Great, affable, and wife.

This day, with univerfal voice,
The Archers him their chieftain chose :
Consenting powers divine,
They bless the day with general joy,
By giving him a princely boy,
To beautify his line ;
Whose birth-day in immortal sang
Shall stand in fair record,
While bended strings the Archers twang,
And beauty is ador'd.

Next Drummond view, who gives their law,
It glades our hearts to see him draw
The bow, and guide the band ;
He, like the faul of a' the lave,
Does with sic honour still behave,
As merits to command.
Blyth be his hours, hale be his heart,
And lang may he preside ;
Lang the just fame of his desert
Shall unborn Archers read :

How

How on this fair propitious day,
With conquest leal he bore away
 The bowl victoriously ;
With following shafts in number four,
Success the like ne'er ken'd before,
 The prize to dignify.
Haste to the garden then bedeen,
 The rose and laurel pow,
And plait a wreath of white and green,
 To busk the victor's brow.

The victor crown, who with his bow,
In spring of youth and am'rous glow,
 Just fifty years finfyne,
The silver arrow made his prize,
Yet ceases not in fame to rise,
 And with new feats to shine.
May every Archer strive to fill
 His bonnet, and observe
The pattern he has set with skill,
 And praise like him deserve.

ON THE ROYAL ARCHERS'
MARCHING UNDER THE DUKE OF HAMILTON
TO SHOOT FOR THE ARROW,

The 4th of August 1724.

Apollo ! patron of the lyre,
 And of the valiant Archers' bow,
 Me with sic sentiments inspire,
 As may appear from thee they flow,
 When, by thy special will and high command,
 I sing the merits of the Royal Band.

Now, like themfells, again the Archers raife
 The bow, in brave array, and claim our lays.
 Phœbus, well pleas'd, shines from the blue serene,
 Glents on the stream, and gilds the chequer'd
 green :

The winds lie hush in their remotest caves,
 And Forth with gentle swell his margin laves ;
 See to his shore the gathering thousands roll,
 As if one gen'ral sp'rit inform'd the whole.
 The bonniest fair of a' Great Britain's isle,
 From chariots and the crowded casements smile ;
 Whilst horse and foot promiscuous form a lane,
 Extending far along the destin'd plain,

Where,

Where, like Bellona's troops, or guards of love,
The Archers in their proper habits move.

Their guardian faint, from yon etherial height,
Displays th' auspicious cros of blazing light :
While on his care he cheerfully looks down,
The pointed thistle wears his ruby crown,
And seems to threat, arm'd ready to engage,—
“ No man unpunish'd shall provoke my rage :”
Well pleas'd the rampant lion smooths his mane,
And gambols gay upon his golden plain.

Like as the sun, when wintry clouds are past,
And fragrant gales succeed the stormy blast,
Shines on the earth, the fields look fresh and
gay,

So seem the Archers on this joyful day ;
Whilst with his graceful mien, and aspect kind,
Their leader raises ev'ry follower's mind,
Who love the conduct of a youth whose birth
To nothing yields but his superior worth ;
And happier is with his selected train,
Than Philip's son, who strove a world to gain :
That prince whole nations to destruction drove,
This prince delights his country to improve.
A monarch rais'd upon a throne may nod,
And pass among the vulgar for a god ;
While men of penetration justly blame
Those who hang on their ancestors for fame ;

But

But own the dignity of high descent,
When the successor's spirit keeps the bent,
Which thro' revolving ages grac'd the line
With all those qualities that brightest shine :
The Archers' chieftain thus, with active mind,
In all that 's worthy never falls behind
Those noble characters from whom he sprung,
In hist'ry fam'd, whom ancient bards have sung.
See, from his steady hand and aiming eye,
How straight in equal lengths the arrows fly !
Both at one end close by the mark they stand,
Which points him worthy of his brave command ;
That as they to his num'rous merits bow,
This victory makes homage fully due.

Sage Drummond next the chief, with counsel
grave,
Becomes his post, instructing all that's brave :
So Pallas seem'd, who Mentor's form put on,
To make a hero of Ulysses' son.

Each officer his character maintains,
While love and honour gratify their pains :
No view inferior brings them to the field,
To whom great chiefs of clans with pleasure yield.

No hidden murmur swells the Archer's heart,
While each with gladness acts his proper part :

No

No factious strife, not plots, the bane of states,
Give birth to jealousies or dire debates ;
Nor less their pleasure who obedience pay,
Good order to preserve, as those who sway.
O smiling muse ! full well thou knows the fair,
Admire the courteous, and with pleasure share
Their love with him that 's generous and brave,
And can with manly dignity behave ;
Then haste to warn thy tender care with speed,
Lest by some random shaft their hearts may bleed,
Yon dangerous youths both Mars and Venus arm,
While with their double darts they threat and
charm ;
Those at their side forbid invading foes,
With vain attempt true courage to oppose ;
While shafts mair subtle, darted from their eye,
Thro' softer hearts with silent conquest fly.

THE POET'S THANKS TO THE ARCHERS,

ON BEING ADMITTED INTO THEIR ROYAL COMPANY.

THE restless mind of man ne'er tires,
To please his favourite desires,
He chiefly that to fame aspires,
 With soul enlarg'd grasps with delight
At every favour which conspires
 To place him in a fairer light.
Such are the followers of the nine,
 Who aim at glory for reward,
Whose flowing fancies brighter shine,
 When from the best they meet regard.

I, not the least now of that train,
Who frae the Royal Archers gain
Applause, while lovely ladies deign
 To take me too beneath their care ;
Then tho' I boast, I am not vain,
 Thus guarded by the brave and fair :
For which kind fate to me this day,
 First to the Powers Supreme I bow,
And next my gratitude I pay,
 Brave sons of Caledon to you.

WILLAN RAMSAY.

1728.

ON SEEING THE ARCHERS DIVERTING THEMSELVES
AT THE BUTS AND ROVERS.

AT THE DESIRE OF SIR WILLIAM BENNET.

HIS DEMAND.

“ THE Rovers and the Buts you saw,
“ And him who gives despotic law ;
“ In numbers sing what you have seen,
“ Both in the garden and the green ;
“ And how with wine they clos’d the day,
“ In harmless toasts, both blyth and gay :
“ This to remember be ’t thy care,
“ How they did justice to the fair.”

THE ANSWER.

SIR, I with much delight beheld
The Royal Archers on the field ;
Their garb, their manner, and their game,
Wakes in the mind a martial flame.
To see them draw the bended yew,
Brings bygone ages to our view,
When burnish’d swords and whizzing flanes
Forbade the Norwegans and Danes,

Romans and Saxons, to invade
A nation of nae foes afraid ;
Whase virtue and true valour fav'd
Them bravely from their b'ing enslav'd :
Esteeming 't greater not to be,
Than lose their darling liberty.
How much unlike !—but mum for that,
Some beaux may snarl if we should prat.
When av'rice, luxury, and ease,
A tea-fac'd generation please,
Whase pithless limbs in filks o'er-clad,
Scarce bear the lady-handed lad
Frae 's looking-glass into the chair,
Which bears him to blafum the fair,
Wha by their actions come to ken
Sic are but in appearance men.
These ill could bruik, without a beild,
To sleep in boots upon the field ;
Yet rise as glorious as the sun,
To end what greatly they begun.
Nor could it suit their taste and pride
To eat an ox boil'd in his hide ;
Or quaff pure element, ah me !
Without ream, fugar, and bohea.

Hail, noble ghosts of each brave fire !
Whose fauls glow'd with a god-like fire :
If you 're to guardian posts assign'd,
And can with greatness warm the mind ;

Breathe

Breathe manly ardours in your race,
 Communicate that martial grace,
 By which thro' ages you maintain'd
 The Caledonian rights unstain'd ;
 That when our nation makes demands,
 She may ne'er want brave hearts and hands.

Here, Sir, I must your pardon ask,
 If I have started from my task ;
 For when the fancy takes a flight,
 We seldom ken where it will light.

But we return to view the band,
 Under the regular command
 Of ane * wha arbitrarily sways,
 And makes it law whate'er he says :
 Him honour and true reason rule,
 Which makes submission to his will
 Nae flav'ry, but a just delight,
 Whiles he takes care to keep them right ;
 Wha never lets a cause depend
 Till the pursuer's power 's at end ;
 But, like a minister of state,
 He speaks, and there 's no more debate :
 Best government, were subjects sure
 To find a prince fit for sic pow'r.

But

* Mr. David Drummond, president of the council.

But drop we cares not desir'd.
To paint the Archers now retir'd
From healthfu' sport, to cheerfu' wine,
Strength to recruit, and wit refine ;
Where innocent and blythfome tale
Permits nae founes to prevail :
Here, Sir, you never fail to please,
Wha can, in phrase adapt with ease,
Draw to the life a' kind of fowks,
Proud shaups, dull coofs, and gabbling gowks,
Gielaingers, and each greedy wight,
You place them in their proper light ;
And when true merit comes in view,
You fully pay them what 's their due.

While circling wheels the hearty gla's,
Well-flavour'd with some lovely las ;
Or with the bonny fruitfu' dame,
Wha brightens in the nuptial flame :

My lord, your toast, the preses cries ;
To lady Charlotte, he replies :
Now, Sir, let 's hear your beauty bright ;
To lady Jean, returns the knight.
'To Hamilton a health gaes round,
And one to Eglinton is crown'd.
How sweet they taste !—Now, Sir, you say ;
Then drink to her that 's far away,

The

The lov'd Southesk.—Neist, Sir, you name;
I give you Basil's handsome dame.
Is 't come to me? then toast the fair
That 's fawn, O Cockburn, to thy skair.
How hearty went these healths about!
How blythly were they waughted out!
To a' the stately, fair, and young,
Frae Haddington and Hopton sprung;
To Lithgow's daughter in her bloom,
To dear Mackay, and comely Home;
To Creightons every way divine,
To Haldane streight as any pine.
O how delicious was the glafs
Which was perfum'd with lovely Befs!
And fae these rounds were flowing gi'en,
To sisters Nisbet, Nell, and Jean;
To sweet Montgomery shining fair;
To Priestfield twins, delightfu' pair;
To Katies four of beauteous fame,
Stuart and Cochran lady claim,
Third Hamilton, fourth Ardrefs name;
To Peggies Pentland, Bang, and Bell;
To Minto's mate, and lively Nell;
To Gordons ravishingly sweet;
To Maule, in whom the graces meet;
To Hepburn, wha has charms in store;
To Pringle, harmony all o'er;
To the polite Kinloch and Hay;
To Wallace, beautifu' and gay;

To Campbell, Skeen, and Rutherford ;
To Maitland fair, the much ador'd ;
To Lockhart with the sparkling een ;
To bonny Crawford ever green ;
To Stuarts mony a dazzling bairn,
Of Invernytie and Denairn ;
'To gracefu' Sleigh and Oliphant ;
To Nafmith, Baird, Scot, Grier, and Grant ;
To Clerk, Anstruther, Frank, and Graham ;
To Deans, agreeing with her name.
Where are we now ?—Come, to the best
In Christendom, and a' the rest.
Dear nymphs unnam'd, lay not the blame
On us, or on your want of fame,
That in this list you do not stand ;
For heads give way :—but there's my hand,
The neist time we have sic a night,
We 'll not neglect to do ye right.

Thus beauties rare, and virgins fine,
With blooming belles, enliven'd our wine,
Till a' our noses 'gan to shine.

Then down we look'd upon the great,
Who 're plagu'd with guiding of the state ;
And pity'd each phlegmatic wight,
Whose creeping fauls ken nae delight,
But kept themselves ay on the gloom,
Startled with fears of what 's to come.

Poor passion ! sure by fate design'd
The mark of an inferior mind :
To Heav'n a filial fear we awe,
But fears nane else a man should shaw.

Lads, cock your bonnets, bend your bows,
And, or in earnest, or in mows,
Be still successful, ever glad,
In Mars's or in Venus' bed ;
Sae bards aloud shall chaunt your praise,
And ladies shall your spirits raise.

Thus, Sir, I've sung what you requir'd,
As Mars and Venus have inspir'd :
While they inspire, and you approve,
I 'll sing brave deeds, and faster love,
Till great Apollo say, " Well done !"
And own me for his native son.

1728.

AN ODE

TO THE EARL OF HARTFORD,

AND THE REST OF THE

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ANTIQUARIES.

To Hartford, and his learned friends,
Whose fame for science far extends,
A Scottish muse her duty sends,
 From Pictish towers :
Health, length of days, and happy ends,
 Be ever yours.

Your gen'rous cares make light arise
From things obscure to vulgar eyes,
Finding where hidden knowledge lies,
 T' improve the mind ;
And most delightfully surprise,
 With thoughts refin'd.

When

When you the broke inscription read,
Or amongst antique ruins tread,
And view remains of princes dead,
 In funeral piles,
Your penetration seems decreed
 To bless these isles.

Where Romans form'd their camps of old,
The gods and urns of curious mould,
Their medals struck of brass or gold,
 'Tis you can show,
And truth of what 's in story told,
 To you we owe.

How beneficial is the care
That brightens up the classic lear !
When you the documents compare
 With authors old,
You ravish, when we can so fair
 Your light behold.

Without your comments, each old book
By all the world would be forfok :
For who of thought would deign to look
 On doubtful works,
Till by your skilful hands they 're struck
 With sterling marks ?

By

By this your learning men are fir'd,
With love of glory, and inspir'd,
Like ancient heroes, who ne'er tir'd
 To win a name ;
And, by their godlike acts, aspir'd
 T' immortal fame.

Your useful labours shall endure,
True merit shall your fame secure,
And will posterity allure
 To search about
For truth, by demonstration fure,
 Which leaves no doubt.

The muse foresees brave Hartford's name
Shall to all writers be a theme,
To last while arts and greatness claim
 Th' historian's skill,
Or the chief instrument of fame,
 The poet's quill.

Pembroke's a name to Britain dear
For learning and brave deeds of weir ;
The genius still continues clear
 In him whose art
In your rare fellowship can bear
 So great a part.

Bards yet unborn shall tune their lays,
 And monuments harmonious raise,
 To Winchelsea and Devon's praise,
 Whose high desert,
 And virtues bright, like genial rays,
 Can life impart.

Nor want we Caledonians sage,
 Who read the painted vellum page,
 No strangers to each antique stage, o
 And Druids' cells ;
 And sacred ruins of each age,
 On plains and fells.

Amongst all those of the first rate,
 Our learned Clerk *, blest with the fate
 Of thinking right, can best relate
 These beauties all,
 Which bear the marks of ancient date,
 Be-north the wall :

The wall which Hadrian first begun,
 And bold Severus carried on,
 From rising to the setting sun,
 On Britain's coast,
 Our ancestors' fierce arms to shun,
 Which gall'd them most.

But

* Sir John Clerk of Pennycuick, Bart.

But now no need of walls or towers,
Ag'd enmity no more endures,
Brave Britain joins her warlike powers,
 That always dare
To open and to shut the doors
 Of peace and war.

Advance, great men, your wise design,
And prosper in the task divine ;
Draw from antiquity's deep mine
 The precious ore,
And in the British annals shine
 Till time's no more.

1728.

ADVICE TO MR. — ON HIS MARRIAGE.

ALL joy to you and your Amelie,
May ne'er your purse nor vigour fail ye :
But have a care how you employ
Them baith ; and tutor well your joy.
Frae me, an auld dab, tak advice,
And hane them baith if ye be wise ;
For warld's wasters, like poor cripples,
Look blunt with poverty and ripples ;
There 's an auld saw, to ilk ane notum—
“ Better to save at braird than bottom.”
Which means, your purse and person use,
As canny poets do their muse ;
For whip and spurring never prove
Effectual, or in verse or love.

Sae far, my friend, in merry strain,
I 've given a douse advice and plain,
And honestly discharg'd my conscience,
In lines, tho' hamely, far frae nonsense.
Some other chiel may daftly sing,
That kens but little of the thing,

And

And blaw ye up with windy fancies,
That he has thigit frae romances,
Of endlefs raptures, constant glee,
That never was, nor ne'er will be.
Alake ! poor mortals are not gods,
And therefore often fall at odds ;
But little quarrels now and than,
Are nae great faults 'tween wife and man :
These help right aften to improve
His understanding, and her love.
Your rib and you, 'bout hours of drinking,
May chance to differ in your thinking ;
But that's just like a shower in May,
That gars the fun-blink seem mair gay.
If e'er she tak the pet, or fret,
Be calm, and yet maintain your state ;
And, smiling, ca' her little foolie,
Syne with a kifs evite a toolie.
This method 's ever thought the braver,
Than either cuffs, or clish-ma-claver :
It shaws a spirit low and common,
That with ill-nature treats a woman ;
They 're of a make sae nice and fair,
They must be manag'd with some care :
Respect them, they 'll be kind and civil ;
But disregarded, prove the devil.

1728.

AN ANACREONTIC ON LOVE.

WHEN a' the warld had clos'd their een,
Fatigu'd with labour, care, and din,
And quietly ilka weary wight
Enjoy'd the silence of the night ;
Then Cupid, that ill-deedy geat,
With a' his pith rapt at my yeat.
Surpriz'd, throw sleep, I cry'd " Wha 's that?"
Quoth he " A poor young wean a' wat ;
" Oh ! haste ye apen,—fear nae skaith,
" Elfe soon this storm will be my death."

With his complaint my soul grew wae,
For, as he said, I thought it fae :
I took a light, and fast did rin
To let the chittering infant in :
And he appear'd to be nae kow,
For a' his quiver, wings, and bow.
His bairnly smiles and looks gave joy,
He seem'd fae innocent a boy.
I led him ben but any pingle,
And beckt him brawly at my ingle ;
Dighted his face, his handies thow'd,
Till his young cheeks like roses glow'd.

But soon as he grew warm and fain,
“ Let ’s try,” quoth he, “ if that the rain
“ Has wrang’d aught of my sporting-gear,
“ And if my bow-string ’s hale and fier.”
With that his arch’ry graith he put
In order, and made me his butt.
Mov’d back a-piece, his bow he drew,
Fast throw my breast his arrow flew.
That dune, as if he ’d found a nest,
He leugh, and with unsonfy jest,
Cry’d, “ Nibour, I ’m right blyth in mind,
“ That in good tift my bow I find :
“ Did not my arrow flie right smart ?
“ Ye ’ll find it sticking in your heart.”

AN ADDRESS OF THE MUSE
TO GEORGE DRUMMOND, THE LORD PROVOST,
AND TO THE TOWN-COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH.

My Lord, my patron, good and kind,
Whose every act of generous care
The patriot shews, and trusty friend ;
While favours, by your thoughts refin'd,
Both public and the private share.
To you the muse her duteous homage pays,
While Edinburgh's interest animates her lays,

Nor will the best some hints refuse :
The narrow soul that least brings forth,
To an advice the rarest bows ;
Which the extensive mind allows,
Being conscious of its genuine worth,
Fears no eclipse ; nor with dark pride declines
A ray from light that far inferior shines.

Our reason and advantage call
Us to preserve what we esteem ;
And each should contribute, tho' small,
Like silver rivulets that fall
In one, and make a spreading stream.

So should a city all her care unite,
T' engage with entertainments of delight.

Man for society was made,
His search of knowledge has no bound ;
Thro' the vast deep he loves to wade,
But subjects ebb, and spirits fade,
On wilds and thinly peopled ground.
Then where the world, in miniature, employs
Its various arts, the soul its wish enjoys.

Sometimes the social mind may rove,
And trace, with contemplation high,
The natural beauties of the grove,
Pleas'd with the turtle's making love,
While birds chant in a summer sky.
But when cold winter snows the naked fields,
The city then its changing pleasure yields.

Then you, to whom pertains the care,
And have the power to act aright,
Nor pains nor prudent judging spare,
The Good Town's failings to repair,
And give her lovers more delight.
Much you have done, both useful and polite ;
O ! never tire, till every plan's complete.

Some

Some may object, we money want,
 Of every project foul and nerve.
 'Tis true ;—but sure, the parliament
 Will ne'er refuse frankly to grant
 Such funds as good designs deserve.
 The thriving well of each of Britain's towns,
 Adds to her wealth, and more her grandeur crowns.

Allow that fifteen thousand pounds
 Were yearly on improvements spent ;
 If luxury produce the funds,
 And well laid out, there are no grounds
 For murmuring, or the least complaint :
 Materials all within our native coast,
 The poor 's employ'd, we gain, and nothing 's lost.

Two hundreds, for five pounds a-day,
 Will work like Turkish galley-slaves ;
 And ere they sleep, they will repay
 Back all the public forth did lay,
 For small support that nature craves.
 Thus kept at work, few twangs of guilt they feel,
 And are not tempt by pinching want to steal.

Most wisely did our city move,
 When Hope *, who judges well and nice,
Was

* Mr. Hope of Rankeilour, who has beautifully planted, hedged, and drained Straiton's Meadow, which was formerly the bottom of a lake.

Was chosen fittest to improve
From rushy tufts the pleasing grove,
From bogs a rising paradise.
Since earth's foundation to our present day
The beauteous plain in mud neglected lay.

Now, evenly planted, hedg'd, and drain'd,
Its verdures please the scent and sight ;
And here the Fair may walk unpain'd,
Her flowing filks and shoes unstain'd,
Round the green Circus of delight ;
Which shall by ripening time still sweeter grow,
And Hope be fam'd while Scotsmen draw the bow.

Ah ! while I sing, the northern air,
Thro' gore and carnage gives offence ;
Which should not, while a river fair,
Without our walls, flows by so near ;
Carriage from thence but small expence ;
The useful corporation too would find,
By working there, more health and ease of mind.

Then sweet our northern flow'rs would blow,
And sweet our northern alleys end ;
Sweet all the northern springs would flow,
Sweet northern trees and herbs would grow,
And from the lake a field be gain'd :
Where on the spring's green margin by the dawn,
Our maids might wash, and blanch their lace and
lawn.

Forbid

Forbid a nasty pack to place

On stalls unclean their herbs and roots,

On the high street a vile disgrace,

And tempting to our infant race

To swallow poison with their fruits *.

Give them a station where less spoil'd and seen,

The healthful herbage may keep fresh and clean.

Besides, they straiten much our street,

When those who drive the hack and dray,

In drunk and rude confusion meet,

We know not where to turn our feet ;

Mortal our hazard every way :

Too oft the ag'd, the deaf, and little fry,

Hemm'd in with stalls, crush'd under axles lie.

Clean order yields a vast delight,

And geniuses that brightest shine

Prefer

* With the more freedom some thoughts in these stanzas are advanced, because several citizens of the best thinking, both in and out of the magistracy, incline to, and have such views, if they were not opposed by some of gross old-fashioned notions. Such will tell you, "O! the street of Edinburgh is "the finest garden of Scotland." And how can it otherwise be, considering how well it is dinged every night! But this abuse we hope to see reformed soon, when the cart and warning-bell shall leave the lazy flattern without excuse, after ten at night.

Prefer the pleasure of the fight
Justly, to theirs who day and night
Sink health and active thought in wine.
Happy the man that 's clean in house and weed,
Tho' water be his drink, and oats his bread.

Kind Fate! on them whom I admire,
Bestow neat rooms and gardens fair,
Pictures that speak the painter's fire,
And learning which the nine inspire,
With friends that all his thoughts may share;
A house in Edinburgh, when the fullen storm
Defaces nature's joyous fragrant form.

O! may we hope to see a stage,
Fill'd with the best of such as can
Smile down the follies of the age,
Correct dull pride and party rage,
And cultivate the growing man;
And shew the virgin every proper grace,
That makes her mind as comely as her face.

Nor, will the most devout oppose,
When with a strict judicious care
The scenes most virtuous shall be chose,
That numerous are; forbidding those
That shock the modest, good, and fair.
The best of things may often be abus'd;
That argues not, when right, to be refus'd.

Thus,

'Thus, what our fathers' waſting blood
Of old from the South Britons won,
When Scotland reach'd to Humber's flood,
We ſhall regain by arts leſs rude,
And bring the beſt and faireſt down
From England's northern counties, nigh as far
Diſtant from court as we of Picſland are.

'Thus far, inſpir'd with honeſt zeal,
Theſe thoughts are offer'd, with ſubmiſſion,
By your own bard, who ne'er ſhall fail
The intereſt of the common-weal,
While you indulge and grant permiſſion
To your oblig'd, thus humbly to rehearſe
His honeſt and well-meaning thoughts in verſe.

1728.

TO ALEXANDER MURRAY OF BROUGHTON,

ON HIS MARRIAGE.

'Tis conquering love can move
The best to all that 's great,
It sweetly binds two equal minds,
And makes a happy state,
When such as Murray, of a temper even,
And honour'd worth, receives a mate from Heaven.
Joy to you, Sir, and joy to her,
Whose softer charms can sooth,
With smiling power, a fullen hour,
And make your life flow smooth.
Man 's but unfinish'd, till, by Hymen's ties,
His sweeter half lock'd in his bosom lies.
The general voice approves your choice,
All sentiments agree,
With fame allow'd, that she 's a good
Branch sprung from a right tree.
Long may the graces of her mind delight
Your soul, and long her beauties bless your sight !
May the bright guard who love reward,
With man recoin'd again,
In offspring fair, make her their care,
In hours of joyful pain !

And

And may my patron healthful live to see
By her a brave and bonny progeny.

Let youthful swains who 'tend your plains,
Touch the tun'd reed, and sing,
While maids advance in sprightly dance,
All in the rural ring ;

And, with the muse, thank the immortal Powers,
Placing with joy Euphemia's name with yours.

AN ODE

ON THE FALLING OF A SLATE FROM A HOUSE
ON THE BREAST OF MRS. M. M——.

WAS Venus angry, and in spite,
Allow'd that stane to fa',
Imagining those breasts so white
Contain'd a heart of snaw?
Was her wing'd son fae cankert set,
To wound her lovely skin;
Because his arrows could not get
A passage farder in?
No:—she is to love's goddess dear,
Her smiling boy's delight.—
It was some hag, that doughtna bear
Sic charms to vex her fight.
Some filly, four, pretending faint,
In heart an imp of hell,
Whase hale religion lies in cant,
Her virtue in wrang zeal:
She threw the stane, and ettled death;
But watching Sylphs flew round,
To guard dear Madie from all skaith,
And quickly cur'd the wound.

THE VISION.

BEDOUN the bents of Banquo brae,
 Mylane I wandert waif and wae,
 Mufand our main mischaunce;
 How be thae faes we ar undone,
 That ftaw the sacred ftane * frae Scone,
 And lead us fic a daunce :
 Quhyle Ingland's Edert taks our tours,
 And Scotland firft obeys,
 Rude ruffians ranfak ryal bours,
 And Baliol homage pays :
 Throch feidom, our freedom
 Is blotit with this fkore,
 Quhat Romans', or no man's,
 Pith culd eir do before.

The

* The old chair (now in Westminster Abbey) in which the Scots kings were always crowned, wherein there is a piece of marble with this infcription :

“ Ni fallat fatum, Scoti, quocunque locatum
 “ Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.”

The air grew ruch with bousteous thuds,
Bauld Boreas branglit outthrow the cluds,
 Maist lyke a drunken wicht ;
The thunder crakt, and flauchts did rift,
Frae the blak visfart of the lift ;
 The forest shuke with fricht ;
Nae birds abune thair wing extenn,
 They ducht not byde the blast ;
Ilk beist bedeen bang'd to thair den,
 Until the storm was past :
 Ilk creature, in nature,
 That had a spunk of sence,
 In neid then, with speid then,
 Methocht, cry'd in defence.

To se a morn in May fae ill,
I deimt dame Nature was gane will,
 To rair with rackles reil ;
Quhairfor to put me out of pain,
And skonce my skap and shanks frae rain,
 I bure me to a beil ;
Up ane heich craig that hungit alaft,
 Out owre a canny cave,
A curious crove of nature's craft,
 Quhilk to me schelter gaif :
 There vexit, perplexit,
 I leint me down to weip ;
 In brief ther, with grief ther,
 I dottard owre on sleip.

Heir Somnus in his filent hand
 Held all my senses at command,
 Quhyle I foryet my cair ;
 The mildest meid of mortall wichts
 Quha pafs in peace the private nichts,
 That wauking finds it rare ;
 Sae in fast slumbers did I ly,
 But not my wakryfe mynd,
 Quhilk still stude watch, and couth espy
 A man with aspeck kynd,
 Richt auld lyke, and bauld lyke,
 With baird thre quarters skant,
 Sae braif lyke, and graif lyke,
 He seemt to be a sanct.

Grit darring dartit frae his ee,
 A braid-sword shogled at his thie,
 On his left arm a targe ;
 A shynand speir fill'd his richt hand,
 Of stalwart mak in bane and brawnd,
 Of just proportions, large ;
 A various rainbow-colourt plaid
 Owre his left spaul he threw,
 Doun his braid back, frae his quhyt heid,
 The silver wymples grew.
 Amaifit, I gaifit,
 To se, led at command,
 A stampant, and rampant,
 Ferfs lyon in his hand.

Quhilk

Quhilk held a thistle in his paw,
 And round his collar graift I saw
 This poesy pat and plain ;
 “ Nemo me impune laceff-
 “ Et : ” — (in Scots) “ Nane fall opprefs
 “ Me, unpunisht with pain.”
 Still shaking, I durst naithing say,
 Till he with kynd accent
 Sayd, Fere let nocht thy hairt affray,
 I cum to heir thy plaint ;
 Thy graneing, and maneing,
 Have laitlie reich'd myne eir,
 Debar then, affar then,
 All eiryness, or feir :

For I am ane of a hie station,
 The warden of this auntient nation,
 And can nocht do thee wrang.
 I vizyt him then round about,
 Syne with a resolution stout,
 Speird, quhair he had been fae lang ?
 Quod he, Althocht I sum forsuke,
 Becaus they did me slicht,
 To hills and glens I me betuke,
 To them that loves my richt ;
 Quhase mynds yet, inclynds yet,
 To damm the rappid spate,
 Devyfing, and pryfing,
 Freidom at ony rate.

Our trechour peirs thair tyranns treit,
Quha jyb them, and thair substance eit,
And on thair honour stamp ;
They, pure degenerate ! bend their baks,
The victor, Langshanks, proudly cracks
He has blawn out our lamp :
Quhy! trew men, fair complainand, tell,
With fobs, thair silent greif,
How Baliol their richts did fell,
With small howp of releife ;
Regretand, and fretand,
Ay at his curfit plots,
Quha rammed, and crammed,
That bargin down thair throts.

Braiv gentrie sweir, and burgers ban,
Revenge is muttert be ilk clan,
That 's to their nation trew ;
The cloysters cum, to cun the evil,
Mailpayers wifs it to the devil,
With its contryving crew :
The hardy wald, with hairy wills,
Upon dyre vengeance fall ;
The feckleß fret owre heuchs and hills,
And eccho answers all ;
Repetand, and greitand,
With mony a fair alace !
For blasting, and casting,
Our honour in disgrace.

Waes me! quod I, our case is bad,
And mony of us are gane mad,
 Sen this disgraceful paction.
We are felld and herryt now by forse;
And hardly help fort, that 's yit worse,
 We are fae forfairn with faction.
Then, has not he gude cause to grumble,
 That 's forst to be a slaiv;
Oppression dois the judgment jumble,
 And gars a wyse man raiv.
 May cheins then, and pains then,
 Infernal be thair hyre,
 Quha dang us, and flang us,
 Into this ugfum myre.

Then he, with bauld forbidding luke,
And staitly air, did me rebuke,
 For being of sprite fae mein:
Said he, It 's far beneath a Scot
To use weak curfes, quhen his lot
 May sumtymys sour his splein,
He rather fould, mair lyke a man,
 Some braiv design attempt;
Gif its nocht in his pith, what than,
 Rest but a quhyle content,
 Nocht feirful, but cheirful,
 And wait the will of fate,
 Which mynds, to desygns to,
 Renew your auntient state.

I ken sum mair than ye do all
Of quhat fall afterwart befall,
 In mair auspicious times ;
For aften far abuve the mune,
We watching beings do convene,
 Frae round eard's utmost climes ;
Quhair ev'ry warden represents
 Cleirly his nation's case,
Gif famyne, pest, or sword torments,
 Or vilains hie in place,
 Quha keip ay, and heip ay,
 Up to themselves grit store,
 By rundging, and spunging,
 The leil laborious pure.

Say, then, said I, at your hie fate,
Lernt ye ocht of auld Scotland's fate,
 Gif eir she 'el be herfell ?
With smyle celest, quod he, I can ;
But it's nocht fit an mortal man
 Should ken all I can tell :
But part to thee I may unfold,
 And thou may saifly ken,
Quhen Scottish peirs slicht Saxon gold,
 And turn trew heartit men ;
 Quhen knaivry, and flaivrie,
 Ar equally dispyfd,
 And loyalte, and royaltie,
 Univerfalie are pryfd.

Quhen all your trade is at a stand,
And cunye clene forsaiks the land,
 Quhilk will be very fune ;
Will preists without their stybands preich,
For nocht will lawyers' causes streich ;
 Faith thatis nae easy done.
All this and mair maun cum to pass,
 To cleir your glamourit sight ;
And Scotland maun be made an as,
 To fet her jugment richt.
 Theyil jade hir, and blad hir,
 Untill she brak hir tether,
 Thoch auld, she 's yit bauld she 's,
 And teuch like barkit lether.

But mony a corfs fall braithless ly,
And wae fall mony a widow cry,
 Or all rin richt again ;
Owre Cheviot prancing proudly north,
The faes fall tak the field near Forth,
 And think the day their ain :
But burns that day fall rin with blude
 Of them that now opprefs ;
Thair carcasses be Corbys fude,
 By thousands on the grefs.
 A king then, fall ring then,
 Of wyse renoun and braiv,
 Quhase pusiens, and sapiens,
 Sall richt restore and faiv.

The view of freidomis fweit, quod I,
O fay, grit tennant of the fkye,
 How neir 's that happie tyme?
We ken things but be circumftans,
Nae mair, quod he, I may advance,
 Leift I commit a cryme.
Quhat eir ye pleis, gae on, quod I,
 I fall not fafh ye more,
Say how, and quhair ye met, and quhy,
 As ye did hint before?
 With air then, fae fair then,
 That glanft like rayis of glory,
Sae godlyk, and oddlyk,
 He thus refumit his ftory.

Frae the fun's ryfing to his fett,
All the pryme rait of wardens met,
 In folemn bricht array,
With vehicles of aither cleir,
Sic we put on quhen we appeir
 To fauls rowit up in clay;
Thair in a wyde and splendit hall,
 Reird up with fhynand beims,
Quhais rufe-treis wer of rainbows all,
 And paivt with ftarrie gleims,
 Quhilk prinked, and twinkled,
 Brichtly beyont compair,
Much famed, and named,
 A caftill in the air.

In midst of quhilk a tabill stude,
A spacious oval reid as blude,
 Made of a fyre-flaucht,
Arround the dazling walls were drawn,
With rays, be a celestial haun,
 Full mony a curious draucht.
Inferiour beings flew in haist,
 Without gyd or derectour,
Millions of myles throch the wyld waste,
 To bring in bowlis of nectar :
 Then roundly, and soundly,
 We drank lyk Roman gods,
Quhen Jove fae, dois rove fae,
 That Mars and Bacchus nods.

Quhen Phebus heid turns licht as cork,
And Neptune leans upon his fork,
 And limband Vulcan blethers ;
Quhen Pluto glowrs as he were wyld,
And Cupid (Luve's we wingit chyld)
 Fals down and fyels his fethers ;
Quhen Pan foryets to tune his reid,
 And flings it cairless bye ;
And Hermes, wing'd at heils and heid,
 Can nowther stand nor lye :
 Quhen staggirrand, and fwaggirrand,
 They stoyter hame to sleip,
Quhyle centeries, at enteries,
 Immortal watches keip.

Thus

Thus we tuke in the high brown liquour,
And bangd about the nectar biquour ;

But evir with his ods :

We neir in drink our judgments drench,
Nor scour about to feik a wench,

Lyk these auld baudy gods :

But franklie at ilk uther ask,

Quhats proper we suld know,
How ilk ane hes performt the task

Affignd to him below.

Our minds then, fae kind then,

Are fixt upon our care,

Ay noting, and plotting,

Quhat tends to thair weelfare.

Gothus and Vandall baith lukt bluff,
Quhyle Gallus sneerd and tuke a snuff,

Quhilk made Allmane to stare ;

Latinus bad him naithing feir,

But lend his hand to haly weir,

And of cowl crouns tak care ;

Batavius, with his paddock-face,

Luking asquint, cryd pisch !

Your monks ar void of fence or grace,

I had lure ficht for fish ;

Your schule-men ar fule-men,

Carvit out for dull debates,

Decoying, and destroying,

Baith monarchies and states.

Iberius, with a gurlie nod,
Cryd, Hogan, yes we ken your god,
 Its herrings ye adore ;
Heptarchus, as he ufd to be,
Can nocht with his ain thochts agre,
 But varies bak and fore ;
Ane quhyle he says, It is not richt
 A monarch to resist,
Neist braith all ryall powir will flicht,
 And passive homage jest ;
 He hitches, and fitches,
 Betwein the hic, and hoc,
 Ay jieand, and flieand,
 Round lyk a wedder-cock.

I still support my precedens
Abune them all for sword and sens,
 Thoch I haiv layn richt now lown,
Quhylk was, becaus I bure a grudge
At sum fule Scotis, quha lykd to drudge
 To princes no their own ;
Sum thanes thair tennants pykt and squeist,
 And purst up all thair rent,
Syne wallopt to far courts, and bleist,
 Till riggs and shaws war spent ;
 Syne byndging, and whyndging,
 Quhen thus redust to howps,
 They dander, and wander,
 About pure lickmadowps.

But

But now its tyme for me to draw
My thynand sword against club-law,
And gar my lyon rore ;
He fall or lang gie sic a sound,
The eccho fall be hard around
Europe frae shore to shore ;
Then lat them gadder all their strenth,
And stryve to wirk my fall,
Tho' numerous, yit at the lenth
I will owrecum them all ;
And raise yit and blase yit,
My braivrie, and renown,
By gracing, and placing,
Aright the Scottis crown.

Quhen my braiv Bruce the same fall weir
Upon his ryal heid, full cleir
The diadem will shyne ;
Then fall your fair oppreßion ceise,
His intrest yours he will not fleice,
Or leiv you eir inclyne :
Thoch millions to his purse be lent,
Yell neir the puirer be,
But rather richer, quhyle its spent
Within the Scottish se :
The field then, fall yeild then,
To honest husbands' welth,
Gude laws then, fall cause then,
A sickly state haiv helth.

Quhyle

Quhyle thus he talkt, methocht ther came
A wondir fair etherial dame,
And to our warden sayd,
Gret Callidon, I cum in ferch
Of you, frae the hych starry arch,
The counfill wants your ayd ;
Frae every quarter of the sky,
As swift as quhirl-wynd,
With spirits speid the chiftains hy,
Sum gret thing is defygnd.
Owre muntains, be funtains,
And round ilk fairy ring,
I haif chaist ze ; O haist ze,
They talk about your king.

With that my hand methocht he shuke,
And wischt I happynefs nicht bruke,
To eild be nicht and day ;
Syne quicker than an arrow's flicht,
He mountit upwards frae my sicht,
Straicht to the milkie way.
My mynd him followit throw the skyes,
Untill the brynie streame
For joy ran trickling frae myne eyes,
And wakit me frae dreame :
Then peiping, half fleiping,
Frae furth my rural beild,
It eisit me, and pleisit me,
To se and smell the feild.

For Flora in hir clene array,
New washen with a showir of May,
 Lukit full sweit and fair ;
Quhyle hir cleir husband frae abuve
Shed down his rayis of genial lue,
 Hir sweits perfumt the air ;
The winds war husht, the welkin cleird,
 The glumand clouds war fled,
And all as fast and gay appeird
 As ane Elyfion shed ;
 Quhilk heisit, and bleisit,
 My heart with sic a fyre,
 As raifes, these praifes,
 That do to Heaven aspyre.

AN ODE.

ALLAN RAMSAY TO HIS SON,

ON HIS PAINTING CAPTAIN JAMES FORESTER.*

YOUNG painter, thy attempt is fair ;
And may'st thou finish, with a grace,
The happy smile, unmixt with care,
That ever shines in For'ster's face.

So far thy labour, well design'd,
May all the outward form display ;
But pencils cannot paint the mind,
In this to me thou must give way.

With

* Who was afterwards Colonel Forester, and known in the literary world as the author of an elegant tract, intitled, "The Polite Philosopher;" the purpose of which is to shew, that no bad man can be truly polite.

With glowing colours thou canst show
Th' embroider'd coat, and nice toupee ;
Draw him a first-rate blazing beau,
Easy and airy, gay and free.

But I can place him in a light,
That will his higher merits hit,
Display what makes him much more bright,
His courage, learning, and his wit ;

His sprightly humour, solid sense,
And—but here further 'tis not meet,
I should his noted worth advance,
Lest I be deem'd a parasite :

Yet, this let little would-be's know,
That are but apes of so much fire,
'Tis the philosopher, not beau,
Whom we deservedly admire.

Trifle (why not ?) with clothes and air,
Sing, dance, and joke, whene'er ye please ;
These oft our joy and health repair,
Acceptable, perform'd with ease.

True,

True, art and nature must combine,
To combat human cares so rife ;
And rarely characters can shine
So fair, as Forester's in life.



ELEGIAC.



1728.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF LADY MARGARET ANSTRUTHER.

ALL in her bloom the graceful fair,
Lucinda, leaves this mortal round :
Her loss a thousand mourners share,
And beauty feels the cruel wound.
Now grief and tears o'er all our joys prevail,
Viewing her rosy cheeks all cold and pale.

Thus some fair star distinguish'd bright,
Which decks the heavens, and guides the main;
When clouds obscure its glorious light,
It leaves the gloomy world in pain :
So sudden death has veil'd Lucinda's eyes,
And left us lost in darkness and surprize.

Nor sweetness, beauty, youth, nor wealth,
Nor blood, tho' nobly high it springs ;
Nor virtue's self can purchase health,
When death severe his summons brings ;
Else might the fair Lucinda, young and gay,
Have blest the world with a much longer stay.

But say, sweet shade, was it thy choice
To leave this low inconstant globe ;
Tir'd with its vain, its jangling noise,
Thou wisely dropt thy human robe ?
Or tell us, guardian angels, tell us true,
Did ye not claim her hence as one of you ?

Yes, well we know it is your way,
When here below such beings shine,
To grudge us e'en our earthly clay,
Which, form'd like her, becomes divine :
Such you demand and free from cares and fears,
Unmindful of our fruitless sighs and tears.

Yet

Yet deign, ye friends to human kind,
The lonely comfort to attend ;
O sooth the anguish of his mind,
And let his killing sorrows end :
Tell him, his sighs and mourning to assuage,
Each day she dwelt with him was worth an age.

Ye lovely virgins who excel,
Ye fair to whom such strains belong,
In melting notes her beauties tell,
And weep her virtues in a song :
See that ye place her merit in true light,
For singing her's your own will shine more bright.

Let east, and west, and south, and north,
Aloud the mournful music hear,
How beauty's fallen beyond the Forth ;
Let Britain's genius cypress wear.
Yet Britain's happy, who such beauty yields,
As forc'd from her's, will grace Elysium's fields.

AN ELEGY

ON JAMES, LORD CARNEGIE.

As poets feign, and painters draw,
Love and the Paphian bride ;
Sae we the fair Southeska faw,
Carnegie by her fide.

Now fever'd frae his sweets by death,
Her grief wha can exprefs ?
What mufe can tell the waefu' fkaith,
Or mother's deep diftrefs ?

Sae rofes wither in their buds,
Kill'd by an eastern blast ;
And sweetest dawns, in May, with clouds,
And ftorms are foon o'ercaft.

Ah, chequer'd life !—Ae day gives joy,
The nieft our hearts maun bleed :
Heaven caus'd a feraph turn a boy,
Now gars us trow he 's dead.

Wha

Wha can reflect on 's ilka grace,
The sweetness of his tongue,
His manly looks, his lovely face,
And judgment ripe fae young !

And yet forbear to make a doubt,
As did the royal fwain,
When he with grief of heart cried out,
That " Man was made in vain !"

Mortals the ways of Providence
But very scrimply scan ;
The changing scene eludes the sense
And reasonings of man.

How many thousands ilka year,
Of hopefu' children crave
Our love and care, then disappear,
To glut a gaping grave !

What is this grave ?—A wardrobe poor,
Which hads our rotting duds :
Th' immortal mind, serene and pure,
Is claith'd aboon the clouds.

Then cease to grieve, dejected fair,
You had him but in trust ;
He was your beauteous son, your heir,
Yet still ae half was dust ;

The other to its native skies
Now wings its happy way ;
With glorious speed and joy he flies,
There blifsfully to stray.

Carnegie then but changes clay
For fair celestial rays ;
He mounts up to eternal day,
And, as he parts, he fays,

“ Adieu, Mamma, forget my tender fate !
“ These rushing tears are vain, they flow too late.”
This faid, he hafted hence with pleasing joy ;
I faw the gods embrace their darling boy.

1728.

AN ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ANNE LADY GARLIES.

How vain are our attempts to know !
How poor, alas ! is reason's skill !
We blindly wander here below,
Yet fondly search Heaven's secret will !
Each day we see the young, the great, the small,
The good, the bad, without distinction fall.

Yet such as have the rest out-shin'd,
We should be faulty to neglect ;
Each grace of beauteous Garlia's mind
Deserves the muse's high respect.
But how can she such worth and goodness paint—
A loving daughter, virtuous wife, and saint ?

Some seraph, who in endless day
With themes sublime employs the lyre,
Dart in my breast a shining ray,
And all my soul with her inspire :
Else sing yourselves so fair a frame and mind,
As now supplies a place among your kind.

As we the glorious fun admire,
Whose beams make ev'ry joy arise,
Yet dare not view the dazzling fire,
Without much hazarding our eyes ;
So did her beauties ev'ry heart allure,
While her bright virtues kill'd each thought impure.

She breath'd more sweetness than the east,
While ev'ry sentence was divine ;
Her smiles could calm each jarring breast ;
Her soul was a celestial mine,
Where all the precious veins of virtue lay :
Too vast a treasure long to lodge in clay !

Tho' sprung from an heroic race *,
Which from the world respect does claim,
Yet wanted she no borrow'd grace,
Her own demands immortal fame :
Worthy as those who shun the vulgar roads,
Start from the crowd, and rise among the gods.

Such pains as weaker minds possess,
Could in her breast no access find ;
But lowly meekness did confess
A steady and superior mind :
Unmov'd she bore those honours due the great,
Nor could have been depress'd with a more humble
fate.

As

* She was daughter of the earl-marshal of Scotland.

As to the fields the huntsman hies,
With joyful shouts he wakes the morn ;
While nature smiles, serene the skies,
Swift fly his hounds, shrill blows his horn :
When suddenly the thund'ring cloud pours rain,
Defaces day, and drives him from the plain.

Thus young Brigantius' circling arms
Grasp'd all that 's lovely to his heart,
Rejoic'd o'er his dear Anna's charms,
But not expecting soon to part ;
When rigid fate, for reasons known above,
Snatch'd from his breast the object of his love.

Ah, Garlies ! once the happiest man,
Than e'er before Brigantine chief,
Now sever'd from your lovely Anne,
'Tis hard indeed to stem your grief :
Yet mind what you might often from her hear—
What Heaven designs submissive we should bear.

Oh ! ne'er forget that tender care,
Those heaven-born thoughts she did employ,
To point those ways how you may share
Above with her immortal joy :
Such a bright pattern of what 's good and great,
Even angels need not blush to imitate.

1722.

TO SIR JOHN CLERK,

ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON, JOHN CLERK ESQ.

IF tears can ever be a duty found,
'Tis when the death of dear relations wound ;
Then you must weep, you have too just a ground.

A son whom all the good and wise admir'd,
Shining with ev'ry grace to be desir'd,
Rais'd high your joyful hopes—and then retir'd.

Nature must yield, when such a weighty load
Rouzes the passions, and makes reason nod !
But who may contradict the will of God ?

By his great Author man was sent below,
Some things to learn, great pains to undergo,
To fit him for what further he's to know.

This end obtain'd, without regarding time,
He calls the soul home to its native clime,
To happiness and knowledge more sublime.

Thus

Thus some in youth like eagles mount the steep,
Which leads to man, and fathom learning's deep ;
Others thro' age with reptile motion creep.

Like lazy streams, which fill the fenny strand,
In muddy pools they long inactive stand,
Till spent in vapour, or immers'd in sand.

But down its flinty channel, without stain,
The mountain-rill flows eagerly to gain,
With a full tide, its origin, the main.

Thus your lov'd youth, whose bright aspiring
mind
Could not to lazy minutes be confin'd,
Sail'd down the stream of life before the wind.

Perform'd the task of man so well, so soon,
He reach'd the sea of bliss before his noon,
And to his memory lasting laurels won.

When life's tempestuous billows ceas'd to roar,
And ere his broken vessel was no more,
His soul serenely view'd the heav'nly shore ;

Bravely resign'd, obeying fate's command,
He fix'd his eyes on the immortal land,
Where crowding seraphs reach'd him out the hand.

Southeska,

Southeska *, smiling cherub, first appear'd,
With Garlies' comfort †, who vast pleasures shar'd,
Conducting him where virtue finds reward.

Think in the world of sp'rits, with how much joy
His tender mother would receive her boy,
Where fate no more their union can destroy.

His good grandfire, who lately went to rest,
How fondly would he grasp him to his breast,
And welcome him to regions of the blest !

From us, 't is true, his youthful sweets are gone,
Which may plead for our weakness, when we
 moan ;
The loss indeed is ours, he can have none.

Thus sailors with a crazy vessel crost,
Expecting every minute to be lost,
With weeping eyes behold a funny coast,

Where happy land-men safely breathe the air,
Bask in the sun, or to cool shades repair,
They longing sigh, and wish themselves were
 there.

But

* James lord Carnegie ; see p. 180.

† Lady Garlies ; see p. 183 ;—both his near relations.

But who would after death to bliss lay claim,
Must, like your son, each vicious passion tame,
Fly from the crowd, and at perfection aim.

Then grieve no more, nor vex yourself in vain ;
To latest age the character maintain
You now possess, you'll find your son again.

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT ALEXANDER,
OF BLACKHOUSE.

THOU fable-border'd sheet, begone!
Harbour to thee I must refuse;
Sure thou canst welcome find from none,
Who carriest such ungrateful news.

Who can attend thy mournful tale,
And ward his soul from piercing woe?
In viewing thee, grief must prevail,
And tears from gushing eyes o'erflow.

From eyes of all that knew the man,
And in his friendship had a share,
Who all the world's affections won,
By virtues that all nat'ral were.

His merits dazzle, while we view!
His goodness is a theme so full,
The Muse wants strength to pay what 's due,
While estimation prompts the will.

But she endeavours to make known
To farthest down posterity,
That good Blackhouse was such an one,
As every one should wish to be.

AN INSCRIPTION

ON THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER WARDLAW.

HERE lies a man, whose upright heart
With virtue was profusely stor'd,
Who acted well the honest part
Between the tenants and their lord.

Between the sand and flinty rock
Thus steer'd he in the golden mean,
While his blyth countenance bespoke
A mind unruffled and serene.

As to great Bruce the Flemings prov'd
Faithful, so to the Flemings' heir
Wardlaw behav'd, and was belov'd
For 's justice, candour, faith, and care.

His merit shall preserve his fame
To latest ages, free from rust,
'Till the arch-angel raise his frame
To join his soul amongst the just.

AN ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

ANNE DUCHESS OF HAMILTON.

WHY founds the plain with fad complaint?
Why hides the sun his beams?
Why fights the wind fae black and cauld?
Why mourn the swelling streams?

Wail on, ye heights! ye glens, complain!
Sun, wear thy cloudy veil!
Sigh, winds, frae frozen caves of snaw!
Clyde, mourn the rueful tale!

She's dead!—the beauteous Anna's dead!—
All nature wears a gloom:
Alas! the comely budding flower
Is faded in the bloom.

Clos'd in the weeping marble vault,
Now cauld and blae she lies;
Nae mair the smiles adorn her cheek,
Nae mair she lifts her eyes.

Too

Too soon, O sweetest, fairest, best,
 Young parent, lovely mate,
Thou leaves thy lord and infant-son,
 To weep thy early fate.

But let thy cheerfu' marriage-day
 Give gladness all around ;
But late in thee the youthful chief
 A heaven of blessings found.

His bosom swells, for much he lov'd ;
 Words fail to paint his grief :
He starts in dreams, and grasps thy shade,
 The day brings nae relief.

The fair illusion skims away,
 And grief again returns ;
Life's pleasures make a vain attempt,
 Disconsolate he mourns.

He mourns his loss, a nation's loss,
 It claims a flood of tears,
When sic a lov'd illustrious star
 Sae quickly disappears.

With roses and the lily buds,
 Ye nymphs, her grave adorn,
And weeping tell—thus sweet she was,
 Thus early from us torn.

To silent twilight shades retire,
Ye melancholy swains,
In melting notes repeat her praise,
In sighing vent your pains.

But haste, calm reason, to our aid,
And paining thoughts subdue,
By placing of the pious Fair
In a mair pleasing view :

Whose white immortal mind now shines,
And shall for ever, bright,
Above th' insult of death and pain,
By the First Spring of Light.

There joins the high melodious thrang,
That strike eternal strings :
In presence of Omnipotence
She now a seraph sings.

Then cease, great James, thy flowing tears,
Nor rent thy soul in vain :
Frae bowers of bliss she 'll ne'er return
To thy kind arms again.

With goodness still adorn thy mind,
True greatness still improve ;
Be still a patriot just and brave,
And meet thy saint above.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

GREAT Newton's dead!—full ripe his fame;
Cease vulgar grief, to cloud our song:
We thank the Author of our frame,
Who lent him to the earth so long.

The godlike man now mounts the sky,
Exploring all yon radiant spheres;
And with one view can more descry,
Than here below in eighty years:

Tho' none with greater strength of soul
Could rise to more divine a height,
Or range the orbs from pole to pole,
And more improve the human fight.

Now with full joy he can survey
These worlds, and ev'ry shining blaze,
That countless in the milky way
Only thro' glasses shew their rays.

Thousands in thousand arts excell'd,
But often to one part confin'd:
While ev'ry science stood reveal'd
And clear to his capacious mind.

His penetration, most profound,
Launch'd far in that extended sea,
Where human minds can reach no bound,
And never div'd so deep as he.

Sons of the east and western world,
When on this leading star ye gaze,
While magnets guide the sail unfurl'd,
Pay to his memory due praise.

Thro' ev'ry maze he was the guide ;
While others crawl'd, he soar'd above :
Yet modesty, unstain'd with pride,
Increas'd his merit, and our love.

He shun'd the sophistry of words,
Which only hatch contentious spite ;
His learning turn'd on what affords
By demonstration most delight.

Britain may honourably boast,
And glory in her matchless son,
Whose genius has invented most,
And finish'd what the rest begun.

Ye Fellows of the Royal Class,
Who honour'd him to be your head,
Erect in finest stone and brass
Statues of the illustrious dead :

Altho'

Altho' more lasting than them all,
Or e'en the poet's highest strain,
His works, as long as wheels this ball,
Shall his great memory sustain.

May from your learned Band arise
Newtons to shine thro' future times,
And bring down knowledge from the skies,
To plant on wild barbarian climes.

Till nations, few degrees from brutes,
Be brought into each proper road,
Which leads to wisdom's happiest fruits,
To know their Saviour and their God.

1728.

AN ODE

TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. FORBES OF NEWHALL.

AH, life ! thou short uncertain blaze,
Scarce worthy to be wish'd or lov'd,
When by strict death so many ways,
So soon, the sweetest are remov'd !

In prime of life and lovely glow,
The dear Brucina must submit ;
Nor could ward off the fatal blow,
With every beauty, grace, and wit.

If outward charms, and temper sweet,
The cheerful smile, and thought sublime,
Could have preserv'd, she ne'er had met
A change till death had sunk with time.

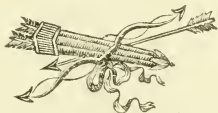
Her soul glanc'd with each heavenly ray,
Her form with all those beauties fair
For which young brides and mothers pray,
And wish for to their infant care.

Sour spleen or anger, passion rude,
These opposites to peace and heaven,
Ne'er pal'd her cheek, nor fir'd her blood;
Her mind was ever calm and even.

Come, fairest nymphs, and gentle swains,
Give loose to tears of tender love;
Strew fragrant flowers on her remains,
While fighting round her grave you move.

In mournful notes your pain express,
While with reflection you run o'er,
How excellent, how good she was:—
She was, alas!—but is no more!

Yet piously correct your moan,
And raise religious thoughts on high,
After her spotless soul, that 's gone
To joys that ne'er can fade or die.



C O M I C.



1721.

THE MORNING INTERVIEW.

WHEN silent show'rs refresh the pregnant soil,
And tender fallads eat with Tuscan oil ;
Harmonious music gladdens every grove,
While bleating lambkins from their parents rove,
And o'er the plain the anxious mothers stray,
Calling their tender care with hoarser bae.
Now cheerful Zephyr from the western skies
With easy flight o'er painted meadows flies,
To kiss his Flora with a gentle air,
Who yields to his embrace, and looks more fair.

When

When from debauch, with sp'ritous juice oppress'd,
The sons of Bacchus stagger home to rest,
With tatter'd wigs, foul shoes, and uncock'd hats,
And all bedaub'd with snuff their loose cravats.
The sun began to sip the morning dew,
As Damon from his restless pillow flew.

Him late from Celia's cheek a patch did wound,
A patch high seated on the blushing round.
His painful thoughts all night forbid him rest,
And he employ'd that night as one oppress'd ;
Musing revenge, and how to countermine
The strongest force, and ev'ry deep design
Of patches, fans, of necklaces and rings,
E'en music's pow'r when Celia plays or sings.

Fatigu'd with running errands all the day,
Happy in want of thought, his valet lay,
Recruiting strength with sleep.—His master calls,
He starts with lock'd-up eyes, and beats the walls.
A second thunder rouses up the sot,
He yawns and murmurs curses thro' his throat :
Stockings awry, and breeches' knees unlac'd,
And buttons do mistake their holes for haste.
His master raves ; cries, " Roger, make dispatch,
" Time flies apace." He frown'd, and look'd his
watch.

" Haste, do my wig ; tie 't with the careless knots ;
" And run to Civet's, let him fill my box :

" Go

“ Go to my laundress, see what makes her stay,
 “ And call a coach and barber in your way.”

Thus orders juggle orders in a throng :
 Roger with laden mem'ry trots along.
 His errands done, with brushes next he must
 Renew his toil amidst presuming dust :
 The yielding comb he leads with artful care
 Thro' crook'd meanders of the flaxen hair :
 Ere this perform'd, he 's almost choak'd to death,
 The air is thicken'd, and he pants for breath.
 The trav'ller thus, in the Numidian plains,
 A conflict with the driving sands sustains.

Two hours are past, and Damon is equipt,
 Pensive he stalks, and meditates the fight :
 Arm'd cap-a-pée, in dress a killing beau,
 Thrice view'd his glass, and thrice resolv'd to
 go,
 Flush'd full of hope to overcome his foe.
 His early pray'rs were all to Paphos sent,
 That Jove's sea-daughter would give her consent ;
 Cry'd, “ Send thy little son unto my aid.”
 Then took his hat, tripp'd out, and no more said.

What lofty thoughts do sometimes push a man
 Beyond the verge of his own native span !
 Keep low thy thoughts, frail clay, nor boast thy
 pow'r,

Fate

Fate will be fate ; and since there 's nothing fure,
Vex not thyself too much, but catch th' auspicious
hour.

The tow'ring lark had thrice his mattins fung,
And thrice were bells for pious service rung ;
In plaids wrapp'd up, prudes throng'd the sacred
dome,

And leave the spacious petticoat at home :
While softest beams seal'd up fair Celia's eyes,
She dreams of Damon, and forgets to rise.
A sportive fylph contrives the subtle snare ;
Sylphs know the charming baits which catch the
fair :

She shews him handsome, brawny, rich, and
young,
With snuff-box, cane, and sword-knot finely hung,
Well skill'd in airs of dangle, tofs, and rap,
Those graces which the tender hearts entrap.

Where Aulus oft makes law for justice pass,
And Charles's statue stands in lasting brass,
Amidst a lofty square which strikes the sight,
With spacious fabrics of stupendous height,
Whose sublime roofs in clouds advance so high,
They seem the watch-tow'rs of the nether sky ;
Where once, alas ! where once the three estates
Of Scotland's parliament held free debates ;
Here Celia dwelt ; and here did Damon move,
Press'd by his rigid fate, and raging love.

To

To her apartment straight the daring swain
Approach'd, and softly knock'd, nor knock'd in
vain.

The nymph, new-wak'd, starts from the lazy
down,

And rolls her gentle limbs in morning-gown :

But half awake, she judges it must be

Frankalia, come to take her morning tea ;

Cries, " Welcome, cousin : "—but she soon began

To change her visage when she saw a man.

Her unfix'd eyes with various turnings range,

And pale surprize to modest red exchange.

Doubtful 'twixt modesty and love she stands ;

Then ask'd the bold impertinent's demands.

Her strokes are doubled, and the youth now found

His pains increase, and open ev'ry wound.

Who can describe the charms of loose attire ?

Who can resist the flames with which they fire ?

" Ah, barbarous maid ! " he cries ; " sure native

" charms

" Are too, too much ; why then such store of

" arms ?—

" Madam, I come, prompt by th' uneasy pains

" Caus'd by a wound from you, and want re-

" venge :

" A borrow'd power was posted on a charm ;

" A patch—damn'd patch ! can patches work such

" harm ?"

He

He said, then threw a bomb, lay hid within
Love's mortar-piece, the dimple of his chin :
It mis'd for once :—she lifted up her head,
And blush'd a smile that almost struck him
dead ;

Then cunningly retir'd, but he pursu'd
Near to the toilet, where the war renew'd.
Thus the great Fabius often gain'd the day
O'er Hannibal, by frequent giving way :
So warlike Bruce and Wallace sometimes deign'd
To seem defeat, yet certain conquest gain'd.

Thus was he laid in midst of Celia's room,
Speechless he stood, and waited for his doom :
Words were but vain, he scarce could use his
breath,

As round he view'd the implements of death.
Here dreadful arms in careless heaps were laid
In gay disorder round her tumbled bed :
He often to the soft retreat would stare,
Still wishing he might give the battle there.
Stunn'd with the thought, his wand'ring looks did
stray

To where lac'd shoes and her silk stockings lay,
And garters which are never seen by day.
His dazzled eyes almost deserted light,
No man before had ever got the sight.
A lady's garters !—earth ! their very name,
Tho' yet unseen, sets all the soul on flame.

The

The royal Ned * knew well their mighty charms,
Else he 'd ne'er hoop'd one round the English
arms :

Let barb'rous honours crown the sword and lance,
Thou next their king does British knights advance,
O Garter ! — “ *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* ”

O, who can all these hidden turns relate,
That do attend on a rash lover's fate !
In deep distress the youth turn'd up his eyes,
As if to ask assistance from the skies.
The petticoat was hanging on a pin,
Which the unlucky swain star'd up within;
His curious eyes too daringly did rove,
Around this oval conic vault of love :
Himself alone can tell the pain he found,
While his wild sight survey'd forbidden ground.
He view'd the tenfold fence, and gave a groan,
His trembling limbs bespoke his courage gone :
Stupid and pale he stood, like statue dumb,
The amber snuff dropt from his careless thumb.
Be silent here, my muse, and shun a plea,
May rise betwixt old Bickerstaff and me,
For none may touch a petticoat but he.

Damon

* Edward III. king of England, who established the most honourable order of the Garter.

Damon thus foil'd, breath'd with a dying tone,
 " Assist, ye pow'rs of love ! else I am gone."
 The ardent pray'r soon reach'd the Cyprian grove,
 Heard and accepted by the queen of love.
 Fate was propitious too, her son was by,
 Who, 'midst his dread artillery, did lie
 Of Flanders lace, and straps of curious dye.
 On India muslin shades the god did loll,
 His head reclin'd upon a tinsy roll.

The mother goddess thus her son bespoke :
 " Thou must, my boy, assume the shape of Shock,
 " And leap to Celia's lap, whence thou may slip
 " Thy paw up to her breast, and reach her lip ;
 " Strike deep thy charms, thy pow'rful art display,
 " To make young Damon conqueror to-day.
 " Thou need not blush to change thy shape, since
 " Jove
 " Try'd most of brutal forms to gain his love ;
 " Who, that he might his loud Saturnia gull,
 " For fair Europa's sake inform'd a bull."

She spoke.—Not quicker does the lamp of day
 Dart on the mountain-tops a gilded ray,
 Swifter than lightning flies before the clap,
 From Cyprus' isle he reached Celia's lap ;
 Now fawns, now wags his tail, and licks her arm ;
 She hugs him to her breast, nor dreads the harm.

So

So in Afcanius' shape, the god unseen,
Of old deceiv'd the Carthaginian queen.

So now the subtle Pow'r his time espies,
And threw two barbed darts in Celia's eyes :
Many were broke before he could succeed ;
But that of gold flew whizzing thro' her head :
These were his last reserve. — When others fail,
Then the refulgent metal must prevail.
Pleasure produc'd by money now appears,
Coaches and fix run rattling in her ears.
O liv'rymen ! attendants ! household-plate !
Court-posts and visits ! pompous air and state !
How can your splendor easy access find,
And gently captivate the fair-one's mind ?
Success attends, Cupid has play'd his part,
And sunk the pow'rful venom to her heart.
She could no more, she 's caught in the snare,
Sighing she fainted in an easy chair.
No more the sanguine streams in blushes glow,
But to support the heart all inward flow,
Leaving the cheek as cold and white as snow.
Thus Celia fell, or rather thus did rise ;
Thus Damon made, or else was made a prize ;
For both were conquerors, and both did yield ;
First she, now he is master of the field.

Now he resumes fresh life, abandons fear,
Jumps to his limbs, and does more gay appear.

Not gaming heir, when his rich parent dies ;
 Not zealot reading Hackney's party lies ;
 Not soft fifteen on her feet-washing night ;
 Not poet when his muse sublimes her flight ;
 Not an old maid for some young beauty's fall ;
 Not the long 'tending stibler *, at his call ;
 Not husbandman in drought when rain descends ;
 Not miss when Limberham † his purse extends,
 E'er knew such raptures as this joyful swain,
 When yielding dying Celia calm'd his pain.
 The rapid joys now in such torrents roll,
 That scarce his organs can retain his soul.

Victor, he 's gen'rous, courts the fair's esteem,
 And takes a basin fill'd with limpid stream,
 Then from his fingers form'd an artful rain,
 Which rous'd the dormant spirits of her brain,
 And made the purple channels flow again.
 She lives, he sings; she smiles and looks more tame:
 Now peace and friendship is the only theme.

The muse owns freely, here she does not know,
 If language pass'd between the belle and beau,
 Or if in courtship such use words ‡ or no.

But

* A probationer.

† A kind keeper.

‡ It being alleged that the eloquence of this species lies in the elegance of dress.

But fure it is, there was a parley beat,
 And mutual love finish'd the proud debate.
 Then to complete the peace and seal the blifs,
 He for a diamond ring receiv'd a kifs
 Of her soft hand ; next the aspiring youth
 With eager transports prefs'd her glowing mouth.
 So by degrees the eagles teach their young
 To mount on high, and stare upon the sun.

A sumptuous entertainment crowns the war,
 And all rich requisites are brought from far.
 The table boasts its being from Japan,
 Th' ingenious work of some great artisan.
 China, where potters coarsest mould refine
 That rays thro' the transparent vessels shine ;
 The costly plates and dishes are from thence,
 And Amazonia * must her sweets dispense ;
 To her warm banks our vessels cut the main,
 For the sweet product of her luscious cane.
 Here Scotia does no costly tribute bring,
 Only some kettles full of Todian spring †.

Where Indus and the double Ganges flow,
 On odorif'rous plains the leaves do grow,

Chief

* A famous river in South America, whence we have our fugar.

† Tod's Well, which supplies the city with water.

Chief of the treat, a plant the boast of fame,
Sometimes call'd green, bohea's its greater name.

O happiest of herbs ! who would not be
Pythagoriz'd into the form of thee,
And with high transports act the part of tea !
Kisses on thee the haughty belles bestow,
While in thy steams their coral lips do glow ;
Thy virtues and thy flavour they commend,
While men, even beaux, with parched lips attend.

EPILOGUE.

The curtain 's drawn : now gen'rous reader say,
Have ye not read worse numbers in a play ?
Sure here is plot, place, character, and time,
All smoothly wrought in good firm British rhyme.
I own 'tis but a sample of my lays,
Which asks the civil sanction of your praise ;
Bestow 't with freedom, let your praise be ample,
And I myself will shew you good example.
Keep up your face : altho' dull critics squint,
And cry, with empty nod, " There 's nothing
in 't :"
They only mean there 's nothing they can use,
Because they find most where there 's most refuse.

1713.

AN ELEGY

ON MAGGY JOHNSTOUN.*

AULD Reeky †, mourn in fable hue,
 Let fouth of tears dreep like May dew;
 To braw tippony ‡ bid adieu,
 Which we with greed
 Bended as fast as she could brew:—
 But ah! she 's dead.

To

* Maggy Johnstoun lived about a mile southward of Edinburgh, kept a little farm, and had a particular art of brewing a small sort of ale, agreeable to the taste, very white, clear, and intoxicating; which made people, who loved to have a good pennyworth for their money, be her frequent customers. And many others of every station, sometimes for diversion, thought it no impropriety to be seen in her barn, or yard.

† A name the country-people give Edinburgh, from the cloud of smoke or reek that is always impending over it.

‡ She sold the Scots pint, which is near two quarts English for two pence.

To tell the truth now, Maggy dang *,
 Of customers she had a bang ;
 For lairds and fouters a' did gang

To drink bedeen:

The barn and yard was aft fae thrang,
 We took the green ;

And there by dizens we lay down,
 Syne sweetly ca'd the healths around,
 To bonny lasses black or brown,

As we loo'd best :

In bumpers we dull cares did drown,
 And took our rest.

When in our pouch we found some clinks,
 And took a turn o'er Bruntsfield Links †,
 Aften in Maggy's, at hy-jinks ‡,

We guzzled scuds,

Till we could scarce, wi' hale-out drinks,
 Cast off our duds.

We

* He dings, or dang, is a phrase which means to excel or get the better.

† The fields between Edinburgh and Maggy's, where the citizens commonly play at the golf.

‡ A drunken game, or new project to drink and be rich, thus: the queff or cup is filled to the brim, then one of the company takes a pair of dice, and after crying hy-jinks, he
 throws

We drank, and drew, and fill'd again,
 O wow ! but we were blyth and fain,
 When ony had their count mistain:

O it was nice

To hear us a' cry, " Pike ye'r bain *,
 " And spell ye'r dice."

Fou

throws them out : the number he calls up points out the person that must drink ; he who threw beginning at himself number one, and so round till the number of the person agree with that of the dice (which may fall upon himself, if the number be within twelve) ; then he sets the dice to him, or bids him take them. He on whom they fall is obliged to drink, or pay a small forfeiture in money ; then throws, and so on : but if he forgets to cry hy-jinks, he pays a forfeiture into the bank. Now he on whom it falls to drink, if there be any thing in bank worth drawing, gets all if he drinks ; then with a great deal of caution he empties his cup, sweeps up the money, and orders the cup to be filled again, and then throws : for if he err in the articles, he loses the privilege of drawing the money. The articles are, 1. drink ; 2. draw ; 3. fill ; 4. cry hy-jinks ; 5. count just ; 6. chuse your doublet-man ; viz. when two equal numbers of the dice are thrown, the person whom you choose must pay a double of the common forfeiture, and so must you when the dice are in his hand. A rare project this ! and no bubble I can assure you ; for a covetous fellow may save money, and get himself as drunk as he can desire in less than an hour's time.

* Is a cant phrase : when one leaves a little in the cup, he is advised to " pick his bone," i. e. drink it clean out.

Fou clofs we us'd to drink and rant,
Until we baith did glow'r and gaunt,
And piſh, and ſpew, and yeſk, and maunt,
 Right ſwaſh I true ;
Then of auld ſtories we did cant,
 When we were fou.

When we were weary'd at the gowff,
Then Maggy Johnſtoun's was our howff ;
Now a' our gameſters may fit dowff,
 Wi' hearts like lead ;
Death wi' his rung rax'd her a yowff *,
 And ſae ſhe died.

Maun we be forc'd thy ſkill to tine,
For which we will right fair repine ?
Or haſt thou left to bairns of thine
 The pawky knack
Of brewing ale amaiſt like wine,
 That gar'd us crack.

Sae brawly did a peafe-ſcon toaſt
Biz i' the queff, and flie the froſt † ;
There we got fou wi' little coſt,
 And muckle ſpeed :
Now wae worth death ! our ſport 's a' loſt,
 Since Maggy 's dead.

Ae

* Reached her a blow.

† Or fright the froſt or coldneſs out of it.

Ae summer night * I was fae fou,
 Amang the riggs I gaed to spew;
 Syne down on a green baw, I trow,
 I took a nap,
 And foucht a night balillilow,
 As found 's a tap.

And when the dawn begoud to glow,
 I hirfl'd up my dizzy pow,
 Frae 'mang the corn like wirrycow,
 Wi' bains fae fair,
 And ken'd nae mair than if a yow
 How I came there.

Some said it was the pith of broom
 That she stow'd in her masking-loom,
 Which in our heads rais'd sic a foam;
 Or some wild feed,
 Which aft the chaping stoup did toom,
 But fill'd our head.

But

* The two following stanzas are a true narrative:

On that slid place where I 'maist brake my bains,
 To be a warning I set up twa stains,
 That nane may venture there as I hae done,
 Unless wi' frosted nails he clink'd his shoon.

But now since 'tis fae that we must
Not in the best ale put our trust,
But whan we 're auld return to dust
 Without remead,
Why should we tak it in disgust
 That Maggy 's dead ?

Of warldly comforts she was rife,
And liv'd a lang and hearty life,
Right free of care, or toil, or strife,
 Till she was stale,
And ken'd to be a kanny wife
 At brewing ale.

Then farewell, Maggy, douce and fell,
Of brewers a' thou beur the bell ;
Let a' thy gossies yelp and yell,
 And without feed,
Guess whether ye 're in heav'n or hell,
 They 're fure ye 're dead.

EPITAPH.

O RARE MAGGY JOHNSTOUN!

AN ELEGY

ON JOHN COWPER*.

I WARN ye a' to greet and drone ;
 John Cowper 's dead—Ohon ! Ohon !
 To fill his post alake there 's none

That

* It is necessary, for the illustration of this elegy to strangers, to let them a little into the history of the kirk-treasurer and his man. The treasurer is chosen every year, a citizen respected for riches and honesty : he is vested with an absolute power to seize and imprison the girls that are too impatient to have on their green gown before it be hemmed. Them he strictly examines, but no liberty is to be granted till a fair account be given of those persons they have obliged : it must be so : a list is frequently given, sometimes of a dozen or thereby, of married or unmarried unfair traders, whom they secretly assisted in running their goods : these his lordship makes pay to some purpose, according to their ability, for the use of the poor. If the lads be obstreperous, the kirk-sessions, and worst of all, the stool of repentance, are threatened, a punishment which few of any spirit can bear. The treasurer, being changed every year, never comes to be perfectly acquainted with the affair ; but their general servant, continuing for a long time, is more expert at discovering such persons, and the places of their resort, which makes him capable to do himself and customers both a good or ill turn. John Cowper maintained this post with activity, and good success, for several years.

That with sic speed
 Could fa'r sculdudry * out like John,
 But now he 's dead.

He was right nacky in his way,
 And eydent baith be night and day,
 He wi' the lads his part could play,
 When right fair fled,
 He gart them good bill-filler † pay;
 But now he 's dead.

Of whore-hunting he gat his fill,
 And made be 't mony a pint and gill;
 Of his braw post he thought nae ill,
 Nor did nae need:
 Now they may mak a kirk and mill
 O 't, since he 's dead.

Altho' he was nae man of weir,
 Yet mony a ane, wi' quaking fear,
 Durst scarce afore his face appear,
 But hide their head:
 The wylie carle, he gather'd gear,
 And yet he 's dead.

Ay

* In allusion to a scent dog; "fa'r," from favour or smell.
 "Sculdudry," a name commonly given to whoring.

† Bull-filver.

She saw the cow well ferv'd, and took a groat. GAY.

Ay, now to some part far awa',
 Alas he 's gane and left it a';
 May be to some fad whilliwha *
 Of fremit blood :
 'Tis an ill wind that dis na blaw
 Somebody good.

Fy upon Death ! he was to blame,
 To whirle poor John to his lang hame :
 But tho' his arfe be cauld, yet fame,
 Wi' tout of trumpet,
 Shall tell how Cowper's awfou name
 Could flie a strumpet.

He ken'd the bawds and louns fou well,
 And where they us'd to rant and reel,
 He paukily on them could steal,
 And spoil their sport :
 Aft did they wifh the muckle de'il
 Might take him for 't.

But ne'er a ane of them he spar'd,
 E'en tho' there was a drunken laird
 To draw his sword, and make a faird †,

In

* "Whilliwha" is a kind of an insinuating deceitful fellow.
 "Fremit blood," not a-kin, because he had then no legitimate
 heirs of his own body.

† A buffle like a bully.

In their defence ;
 John quietly put them in the guard,
 To learn mair fense :

There maun they lie till sober grown,
 The lad neist day his fault maun own ;
 And to keep a' things hush and low'n
 He minds the poor * ;
 Syne after a' his ready 's shown,
 He damns the whore.

And she, poor jade, withoutten din,
 Is sent to Leith-wynd-fit † to spin,
 With heavy heart, and cleathing thin,
 And hungry wame,
 And ilka month a well-paid skin,
 To mak her tame.

But now they may scour up and down,
 And safely gang their wakes arown,
 Spreading their claps throw a' the town,
 But fear or dread ;
 For that great kow to bawd and lown,
 John Cowper's dead.

Shame

* Pays hush-money to the treasurer.

† The house of correction at the foot of Leith-wynd ; such
 as Bridewell in London.

Shame faw ye'r chandler-chafts *, O Death !
 For stapping of John Cowper's breath,
 The los of him is public skaith.

I dare well fay,
 To quat the grip he was right laith
 This mony a day.

POSTSCRIPT.

Of umquhile John to lie or bann,
 Shaws but ill will, and looks right shan,
 But some tell odd tales of the man ;
 For fifty head
 Can gie their aith they 've seen him gawn †
 Since he was dead.

Keek but up throw the Stinking Stile ‡,
 On Sunday morning a wee while,
 At the kirk door, out frae an isle,

It

* Lean or meagre cheeked ; when the bones appear like the sides or corners of a candlestick, which in Scots we call a chandler.

† The common people, when they tell their tales of ghosts appearing, say, he has been seen "gawn," or stalking.

‡ Opposite to this place is the door of the church, which he attended, being a beadle.

It will appear :
But tak good tent ye dinna file
Ye'r breeks for fear.

For well we wat it is his ghaist :
Wow, wad some fouk that can do 't best *,
Speak till 't, and hear what it confest ;
'Tis a good deed
To fend a wand'ring faul to rest
Amang the dead.

* It is another vulgar notion, that a ghost will not be laid to rest till some priest speak to it, and get an account of what disturbs it.

1717.

AN ELEGY

ON LUCKY WOOD*.

O Canongate ! poor elritch hole,
 What los, what crosses dost thou thole !
 London and death † gar thee look drole,
 And hing thy head :
 Wow, but thou hast e'en a cauld coal
 To blaw indeed.

Hear me, ye hills, and every glen,
 Ilk craig, ilk cleugh, and hollow den,
 And echo shrill, that a' may ken

The

* Lucky Wood kept an alehouse in the Canongate ; was much respected for hospitality, honesty, and the neatness both of her person and house.

† The place of her residence being the greatest sufferer by the loss of our members of parliament, which London now enjoys, many of them having their houses there, being the suburb of Edinburgh nearest the king's palace ; this, with the death of Lucky Wood, are sufficient to make the place ruinous.

The waefou thud
 Be rackless Death, wha came unseen *
 To Lucky Wood.

She 's dead, o'er true, she 's dead and gane,
 Left us and Willie † burd alane.
 To bleer and greet, to fob and mane,
 And rugg our hair,
 Because we 'll ne'er see her again
 For ever mair.

She gae'd as fait as a new preen,
 And kept her housie snod and been;
 Her pewther glanc'd upo' your een
 Like filler plate:
 She was a donsie wife and clean,
 Without debate.

It did ane good to see her stools,
 Her boord, fire-side, and facing-tools ‡;
 Rax, chandlers, tangs, and fire-shools,

Basket

* Or unfent for. There is nothing extraordinary in this, it being his common custom; except in some few instances of late, since the falling of the bubbles, i. e. South-Sea adventurers.

† Her husband William Wood.

‡ Stoups, or pots and cups; so called from the facers.

Basket wi' bread.

Poor facers * now may chew pea-hools,
Since Lucky 's dead.

She ne'er gae in a lawin fause †,
Nor stoups a' froath aboon the haufe,
Nor kept dow'd tip within her waws,
But reaming fwats ;
She ne'er ran four jute, because
It gees the batts.

She had the gate fae well to please,
With gratis beef, dry fish, or cheese,
Which kept our purses ay at ease,
And health in tift,
And lent her fresh nine gallon trees
A hearty lift.

She

* The facers were a club of fair drinkers, who inclined rather to spend a shilling on ale than two pence for meat. They had their name from a rule, which they observed of obliging themselves to throw all they left in the cup in their own faces ; wherefore, to save their face and clothes, they prudently sucked the liquor clean out.

† All this verse is a fine picture of an honest ale-seller—a rarity.

She gae us oft hail legs o' lamb,
And did nae hain her mutton ham ;
Then aye at Yule whene'er we came,
 A braw goose-pye ;
And was na that good belly-baum ?
 Nane dare deny.

The writer lads fow well may mind her,
Furthy was she, her luck design'd her
Their common mither, fure nane kinder
 Ever brake bread ;
She has na left her mak behind her,
 But now she 's dead.

To the sma' hours we aft sat still,
Nick'd round our toasts and snishing-mill ;
Good cakes we wanted ne'er at will,
 The best of bread ;
Which aften cost us mony a gill
 To Aikenhead *.

Could

* The Nether-bow porter, to whom Lucky's customers were often obliged for opening the port for them, when they staid out till the small hours after midnight.

Could our faut tears like Clyde down rin,
 And had we cheeks like Corra's Lin *,
 That a' the warld might hear the din
 Rair frae ilk head ;
 She was the wale of a' her kin,
 But now she 's dead.

O Lucky Wood ! 'tis hard to bear
 The los ; but oh ! we maun forbear :
 Yet fall thy memory be dear
 While blooms a tree ;
 And after-ages' bairns will speer
 'Bout thee and me.

EPITAPH.

Beneath this fod
 Lies Lucky Wood,
 Whom a' men might put faith in ;
 Wha was na sweer,
 While she winn'd here,
 To cram our wames for naithing.

* A very high precipice nigh Lanerk, over which the river Clyde falls, making a great noise, which is heard some miles off.

1721.

AN ELEGY

ON PATIE BIRNIE,

The famous fiddler of Kinghorn ;
 Who gart the lieges gawff and girn ay,
 Aft till the cock proclaim'd the morn.
 Tho' baith his weeds and mirth were pirny * ;
 He roos'd these things were langeft worn,
 The brown ale was his kirn ay,
 And faithfully he toom'd his horn.

“ And then besides his valiant acts,
 “ At bridals he wan many placks.”

HAB. SIMPSON.

IN sonnet flee the man I sing,
 His rare engine in rhyme shall ring,
 Wha flaid the stick out o'er the string
 With sic an art ;
 Wha sang fae sweetly to the spring,
 And rais'd the heart.

Kinghorn

* When a piece of stuff is wrought unequally, part coarse and part fine, of yarn of different colours, we call it pirny, from the pirn, or little hollow reed, which holds the yarn in the shuttle.

Kinghorn may rue the ruefou day
 That lighted Patie to his clay,
 Wha gart the hearty billies stay,
 And spend their cash,
 To see his snout, to hear him play,
 And gab fae gash.

When strangers landed *, wow fae thrang,
 Fuffin and peghing, he wad gang,
 And crave their pardon that fae lang
 He 'd been a-coming ;
 Syne his bread-winner out he 'd bang,
 And fa' to bumming.

Your honour's father †, dead and gane,
 For him he first wa'd mak' his mane,
 But soon his face ‡ could mak' ye fain,

When

* It was his custom to watch when strangers went into a public house, and attend them; pretending they had sent for him, and that he could not get away sooner from other company.

† It was his first compliment to one, though he had perhaps never seen him nor any of his predecessors, that "well he ken'd
 " his honour's father, and been merry with him, and an excellent good fellow he was."

‡ Shewing a very particular comicalness in his looks and gestures, laughing and groaning at the same time. He plays, sings, and breaks in with some queer tale twice or thrice e'er he get through the tune. His beard is no small addition to the diversion.

When he did fough,
 “ O wiltu, wiltu do ’t again * ! ”
 And grain’d and leugh.

This fang he made frae his ain head †,
 And eke “ The auld man’s mare she ’s dead,
 “ Tho’ peets and turfs and a ’s to lead : ”
 O fye upon her !
 A bonny auld thing this indeed,
 An ’t like your honour.

After ilk tune he took a fowp,
 And bann’d wi birr the corky cowp ‡
 That to the Papists’ country scowp,
 To lear ha, ha’s,
 Frae chiels that sing hap, flap, and lowp,
 Wantin the b—s.

That beardless capons are na men,
 We by their fozie springs might ken,
 But ours, he said, could vigour len’
 To men o’ weir,
 And gar them stout to battle sten’
 Withoutten fear.

How

* The name of a tune he played upon all occasions.

† He boasted of being poet as well as musician.

‡ Curfed strongly the light-headed fellows who run to Italy to learn soft music.

How first he practis'd ye shall hear :—
 The harn pan of an umquhile mare
 He strung, and strak founds fast and clear
 Out o' the pow,
 Which fir'd his faul, and gart his ear,
 With gladness glow.

Sae some auld-gabbet poets tell,
 Jove's nimble son and leckie snell
 Made the first fiddle of a shell *,
 On which Apollo
 With meikle pleasure play'd himsel
 Baith jig and solo.

O Johny Stocks †, what 's come o' thee?
 I 'm sure thou 'lt break thy heart and die;
 Thy Birnie gane, thou 'lt never be
 Nor blyth, nor able
 To shake thy short houghs merrily
 Upon a table.

How pleasant was 't to see thee diddle
 And dance sae finely to his fiddle,
 With nose forgainst a lass's middle,

And

* Tuque testudo, resonare septem

Callida nervis.

HOR.

† A man of low stature, but very broad; a loving friend of his, who used to dance to his music.

And briskly brag,
 With cutty steps to ding their striddle,
 And gar them fag.

He catch'd a crishy webster loun
 At runcling o' his deary's gown,
 And wi' a rung came o'er his crown,
 For being there ;
 But starker Thrums * got Patie down,
 And knooft him fair.

Wae worth the dog ! he maist had fell'd him,
 Revengefu' Pate aft green'd to geld him,
 He aw'd amends, and that he tell'd him,
 And bann'd to do 't ;
 He took the tid, and fairly sell'd him
 For a recruit.

Pate was a carle of canny sense,
 And wanted ne'er a right bein spence †,
 And laid up dollars in defence
 'Gainst eild and gout ;
 Well judging gear in future tense
 Could stand for wit.

Yet

* A cant name for a weaver.

† Good store of provision ; the spence being a little apartment for meal, flesh, &c.

Yet prudent fouk may tak' the pet :
Anes thrawart porter * wad na let
Him in while latter meat was hett,
 He gaw'd fou fair,
Flang in his fiddle o'er the yett,
 Whilk ne'er did mair.

But profit may arise frae los,.
Sae Pate got comfort by his cros :
Soon as he wan within the clofe,
 He doufly drew in
Mair gear frae ilka gentle gofs
 Than bought a new ane.

When lying bed-fast sick and fair,
To parish priest he promis'd fair,
He ne'er wad drink fou any mair :
 But hale and tight,
He prov'd the auld man to a hair,
 Strute † ilka night.

The haly dad with care essays
To wile him frae his wanton ways,
And tell'd him of his promise twice :

Pate

* This happened in the duke of Rothes's time. His Grace was giving an entertainment, and Patrick being denied entry by the servants, he, either from a cunning view of the lucky consequence, or in a passion, did what is described.

† Drunk.

Pate anfw'er'd cliver,
“ Wha tents what people raving fays
“ When in a fever ?”

At Bothwell Brig * he gade to fight ;
But being wife as he was wight,
He thought it shaw'd a faul but flight,
Daftly to stand,
And let gunpowder wrang his fight,
Or fiddle hand :

Right pawkily he left the plain,
Nor o'er his shoulder look'd again,
But scour'd o'er mofs and moor amain,
To Rieky straight,
And tald how mony whigs were slain,
Before they faught.

Sae I've lamented Patie's end ;
But lest your grief o'er far extend,
Come dight your cheeks, ye'r brows unbend,
And lift ye'r head,
For to a' Briton be it ken'd,
He is not dead.

* Upon Clyde, where the famous battle was fought in 1679, for the determination of some kittle points : but I dare not assert, that it was religion carried my hero to the field.

1721.

CHRIST'S KIRK ON THE GREEN.

IN THREE CANTOS.

Κονσιδερ ιτ ναριλι, ριδ αφτηνθ θαν εγισ,
Ουιλ ατ εν βλινκ σλι ποετρι γοτ τεν ις. Γ. Δεγλας.

CANTO I. *

“ W_ES nevir in Scotland hard nor fene
Sic danfing nor deray †,
Nouthir at Falkland ‡ on the grene,

Nor

* The edition of the first canto is here printed from that which is given in “ Poetical Remains of James I.” printed at Edinburgh 1783 ; together with the notes of the ingenious and learned editor.

† Merriment, riot, disorder. G. D. p. 35. and 288. From the Fr. *deroyer*.—From the same derivation is the Scots word *royet*, or *royit*, signifying romping, daft, extravagant.

‡ One of the royal houses, situated on the north side of the Lomond hills in the county of Fife. The castle of Falkland, a noble edifice, was habitable in the beginning of the present century, though now in ruins.

Nor Pebillis * at the play ;
 As wes of wowaris †, as I wene,
 At Christis Kirk ‡ on ane day :
 Thair came out Kitties §, weschen clene,

In

* Or Peebles ; the head town of the county of Tweeddale, situated on the banks of the river Tweed. The annual games of archery, and other pastimes at Peebles, were of very ancient institution. Our poet, king James I., is said to have often resorted to that annual festivity.

† Wooers, suitors.

‡ The scene of action of this poem is traditionally said to have been a place of this name, within the parish of Kinethmont, in that part of the county of Aberdeen, near Lesly, called the Garrioch. In its neighbourhood is the hill of Dunnideer, which rises like a pyramid in the midst of the plain of Garrioch ; on the top of which are the remains of a castle, said to have been a hunting-seat of the Scottish kings. Allan Ramsay seems to have mistaken the above situation for Lesly in the county of Fife.

§ Rustic, romping, country lasses, drest in their new apparel. Bishop Gibson's edition has it,

“ For there came Kitty washen clean,
 “ In her new gown of grey,” &c.

which is substituting the proper name of one girl (Kitty, or Kattie) in place of the general epithet given to the whole country lasses, that were assembled on this occasion.

In thair new kirtillis of gray,
Full gay,
At Christis Kirk of the grene that day.

“ To dans thir damysfellis thame dicht *,
Thir lasses licht of laitis †,
Thair gluvis war of the rassel rycht ‡,
Thair fhune war of the Straitis §,
Thair kirtillis war of Lynkome licht ||,
Weil preft with mony plaitis,
Thay war fa nyce quhen men thame nicht ¶,
Thay fquelit lyke ony gaitis ε,
Sa loud,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Of

* Dressed, or prepared for the occasion, *G. D.* p. 233. 395.

† The context plainly requires “light-heeled girls:” laitis literally signifies joints; probably derived from the Danish led, a joint, a knuckle. See Wolfe’s *Dan. Dict.* in vo. Led. *G. C.*

‡ Probably from the Saxon ra, or rae, a roe-deer; and ffell, a skin.

§ Probably a local name for a particular kind of leather at that period.

|| Gowns or petticoats of Lincoln manufacture.

¶ When men came nigh or toyed with them.

ε Shrieked like wild goats.

“ Of all thir madynis, myld as meid,
 Wes nane fa jympt * as Gillie,
 As ony rose hir rude wes reid †,
 Hir lyre ‡ wes lyke the lillie :
 Fow zellow zellow wes hir heid,
 Bot scho of lufe wes fillie § ;
 Thot all hir kin had sworn hir deid ||,
 Scho wald haif bot sweit Willie
 Alane,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Scho skornit Jok, and skrapit at him ∂,
 And murgeonit him ε with mokkis,
 He wald haif lufit θ, scho wald not lat him,
 For all his zellow lokkis,

He

* Neat, tight, slender.

† Her colour or complexion was red. G. D. 408.

‡ Her skin, bosom, or neck. The lyre, or lure, in vulgar speech, is the breast or bosom.

§ Seile, fele, in our old language, signifies happy. G. D. Also simple, weak. The reader may take it in either sense.

|| Should have doomed her to death.

∂ Scropit, mocked or scorned. John Knox's Hist. p. 93.

ε Made mouths at, or ridiculed him.

θ Loved.

He chereift hir, fcho bad gae chat him *,
 Scho compt him not twa clokkis †,
 Sa fchamefully his fchort gown ‡ fet him,
 His lymis wer lyk two rokkis §,
 Scho faid,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Tam Lutar wes thair menstral meit,
O Lord, as he could lanfs || !
He playit sa schrill, and sang sa fweit,
Quhile Tousy tuke a trans 3,

Auld

* Go to the gallows. G. D. 239.

† She reckoned him not worth two clocks, or beetles.

‡ A short cloak or gown was the dress of the time, and continued so till the Restoration in 1660.

§ His legs were like two rokkis, or distaffs; or, according to another Scottish phrase, he was spindle-shanked.

|| Skip. G. D. 297. The meaning, as applicable to the minstrel, is explained in the next line, "He plaid fa
"schrill."

♂ A hop or skip. From Lat. probably of transire, to go across.

Auld Lightfute thair he did forleit *,
And counterfuttet Frans †;
He used himself as man discreet,
And up tuke Moreifs danſs ‡
Full loud,
At Chriſtis Kirk, &c.

“ Then Steven cam steppand in with stendis,
Na rynk & mycht him arreift || ;
Platefute he bobit up with bendis,
For Mald he maid requiest,
He lap & quhill he lay on his lendis,
But ryfand he wes priest,

Quhill

* Forfake, or desert. G. D. This applies to Toufy the dancer, who scorned to dance, like auld Lightfute, after the Scots fashion, or the reel, a well-known measure.

† Aped to dance after the French mode.

‡ Morrice or Moorish dances, rather of slow solemn movement, performed usually by gypsies after the Moorish manner.

§ A ring formed to prevent intrusion. Rud. Gloss. G. D.
in vo. Renk. G. C.

|| Stay, or stop.

3 No Scotsman but knows that lap is the perfect of the verb to leap. The obvious sense of the passage is, "He lap" and capered so high, that he fell at his length."

Quhill that he oisted * at bayth endis,
For honour of the feist
That day,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Syne Robene Roy begouth to revell †,
And Downy till him druggit ‡;
‘ Let be,’ quo Jok, and caw’d him javell §,
And be the tail him tuggit ||,
The kenfy cleikit ∂ to the cavell,
Bot, Lord, than how they luggit € !
Thay partit manly with a nevell θ,
God wait gif hair was ruggit
Betwixt thame
At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Ane

* “ Hoisted, or coughed at baith ends, (i. e. broke wind,) “ in honour of the feast.” A coarse, though most humorous picture !

† Began to be riotous.

‡ Dragged Downy towards him.

§ Javeller ; probably a troublesome fellow.

|| Pulled him by the tail of his cloak.

‡ Snatched up : a common Scots phrase. Cavell, or gavell, probably a cudgel or rung.

ε Pulled each other by the ears.

θ A blow with the fist. Most of the above words, being vulgar, are now obsolete, and not to be found in any glossary. Their meaning, however, may easily be conjectured.

“ Ane bent a bow, sic sturt * coud steir him †,
 Grit skayth wes 'd to haif skard him ‡,
 He cheset a flane as did affeir him §,
 The toder said ‘ dirdum dardum || !’
 Throw baith the cheikis he thocht to cheir him Ⓜ,
 Or throw the erss heif chard him,
 Bot be ane aikerbraid it cam not neir him ε
 I can nocht tell quhat marr'd him,
 Thair,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ With that a freynd of his cry'd, ‘ fy !’
 And up ane arrow drew,
 He forgit θ it sa furiously,

The

* Trouble, disturbance, vexation. G. D. p. 41. 219. 19.

† Move, or provoke him.

‡ It would have been dangerous, or attended with skaith, to have skared or hindered him.

§ He choosed an arrow, as did effeir, belong to, or was fit for his purpose.

|| The other, in great fright, bauld out ‘ dirdum dardum !’
 —Confusion ! blood and murder !

Ⓜ Cheir, and chard, are obsolete words. We may conjecture their meaning, from the sense of the passage—to bore, or to pierce.

ε The humour here is very arch.

θ Here forgit means, ‘ He drew his bow with great ‘ fury.’

The bow in flenderis * flew ;
 Sa wes the will of God, trow I,
 For had the tre bene trew †,
 Men said, that ken'd his archery,
 That he had slane ‡ enow
 That day,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Ane hasty hensure §, callit Hary,
 Quha wes ane archer heynd ||,
 Tilt up ∂ a taikle withouten tary,
 That torment fa him teynd ε ;

I wait

* The bow flew in splinters.

† Had the tree, or wood, been found.

‡ i. e. That he would, or might have slain many a one. The old Scots frequently use the pluperfect of the indicative, in place of the imperfect of the subjunctive.

§ One expert at throwing a stone, by swinging the arm downwards by the side of the haunch: to hench, to throw a stone in the above manner, in place of swinging the arm upwards by the side of the head. *G. C.*

|| Expert, handy. *Rud. Gloss. G. D.*

∂ Fitted up without delay his tackle, his bow and arrow.

ε That torment or vexation so angered him; from the old English *tene*, or *teen*, anger, rage. *Rud. G. D.*
p. 57. 10.

He hecht * to perfs him at the pap,
 Theron to wed † a weddir,
 He hit him on the wame ‡ a wap,
 It buft lyk ony bledder ;
 But fua his fortune wes and hap,
 His doubilit wes maid of ledder,
 And faift him
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ The buff fo boifteroufly abaift § him,
 That he to the eard dusht down ||,

The

* He eagerly aimed at the pap.

† To pledge.—To wad a wedder, feems to be to pledge or wager a wedder. Hence a wadset, or land given in pledge.

It may be conjectured, that when archery was in vogue among the lairds or gentry, it would be a common pastime to shoot at butts for prizes ; and that a sheep or wedder, or, in other words, a dinner, as at present, might be the common prize or wager. The 18th act of king James I. first parliament, alludes probably to fuch a custom. It enacts, ‘ That wha ufes not ‘ archery on the appointed holydays for shooting, the laird of ‘ the land, or sheriff, fall raife of him a wedder.’

‡ A well-known Scots phrase for a blow on the belly ; a ftroke not deadly, making a found like that made on a blown-up bladder.

§ Stunned, amazed him.

|| Dasht, (Engl.) Fell suddenly down.

The uther man for deid then left him,
 And fled out o' the toune ;
 The wyves cam furth, and up they reft him *,
 And fand lyfe in the lounne †,
 Then with three routis ‡ up they reft him,
 And cur'd him of his foune
 Fra hand § that day,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ A yaip || young man, that ftude him neift,
 Lous'd aff a fchott with yre,

He

* Pulled him up. I fcarce think our poet would have ufed the fame words in the fecond verfe after this.

† The rogue, who only feigned himfelf in a fwoon.

‡ With three outcries, they raifed him up, and brought him out of his pretended fwoon.

§ Or out of hand ; instantly.

The 12th ftanza, as above, I have fupplied from B. Gibson's edition ; I doubt, however, if it is genuine, as it is not in Banatyne's MS. However, as it naturally connects with the former ftanza, and the fame vein of humour runs through it, I give it to the reader. A few of the words, which Gibson had modernized from the old Scots orthography, I have reftored.

|| Or yaip ; eager, ready, alert. G. D.

He ettlit * the bern † in at the breist,
 The bolt ‡ flew ou'r the byre,
 Ane cry'd fy ! he had flane a priest §
 A myle beyond ane myre ;
 Then bow and big || fra him he keist,
 And fled as fers as fyre
 Of flint,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ With forks and flails thay lent grit flappis,
 And flang togidder lyk friggis †,

With

* He tried or aimed to shoot the lad in the breast.

† Bairn, often for a young man, as in G. D. 439. 22.

‡ Shaft, or arrow.

§ The worst or most atrocious of all murders.

|| The quiver which held his arrows.

Since the introduction of fire-arms, the use of the bow in war is now quite laid aside ; and, even as an exercise of sport, may probably be soon forgotten. There remains still one, and only one, society in Scotland where archery is kept up, the Royal Company of Archers, which always did, and at present can boast of having the chief of the Scottish nobility and gentry inrolled amongst its members. Long may this ancient institution flourish ; and the manly exercise of the bow, the care of so gallant a monarch as James I., be preserved and transmitted down to latest posterity !

‡ Freik is a foolish fellow. Rud. Gloss. G. D.—G. C.

That 'day full weil he previt *,
 For he cam hame with unbirft bainis †,
 Quhair fechtaris ‡ wer mifchievit
 For evir,
 At Chrifteis Kirk, &c.

“ Heich Hutchon with a hiffil ryfs §,
 To red || can throw them rummill,
 He muddlit ∂ thame doun lyk ony myfs,
 He wes na baity bummil ε;
 Thoch he wes wight θ, he wes nocht wyfs
 With fic jangleurs to jummil,

For

* i. e. Proved himfelf a cautious man, that kept himfelf out of the fray.

† Unbruifed bones.

‡ Fighters.

§ A hazel rung or fapling. Ryce fignifies young, or branch-wood.

|| To feparate or part the combatants, he rumbled or rushed through them.

∂ Overturned, drove them down like mice before him.

ε A bumbler or bungler of any piece of work.

θ He was not wife to interfere with fuch janglers, although he was ftrong.

“ The town foutar in grief was bowdin *
 His wyfe hang † in his waift,
 His body wes with blud all browdin ‡,
 He grainit lyk ony gairt ;
 Hir glitterand hair that wes full gowdin,
 Sa hard in lufe him laift §,
 That for hir fake he wes na yowdin ||,
 Seven myle that he wes chaift,
 And mair,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ The millar wes of manly mak,
 To meit him wes na mowis ¶,
 Thai durst not ten cum him to tak,
 Sa nowitit ̃ he thair powis ;
 The buschment haill ̸ about him brak,
 And bickert him with bows,

Syn

* Full of, or swelled with rage. Rud. Gloss. G. Dougl.
 in vo. Bodnyt.

† Hung at, or clung to his waift.

‡ Besmeared or embroidered.

§ Laced.

|| Yolden, or yulding, in Tyrwhit's Gloss. Chan. G. C.

¶ No sport, or jest.

̃ He so annoyed their heads. Rud. Gloss. G. D. vo. Noy.

̸ The whole body lay in ambush, and broke forth on
 him. G. D.

Syn traytourly behind his back
 They hewit him on the howifs *
Behind,
 At Chrifteis Kirk, &c.

“ Twa that wer herdsmen of the herd,
 Ran upon udderis lyk rammis,
 Than followit feymen † richt unaffeird,
 Bet on with barrow trammiss,
 But quhair thair gobbis wer ungeird ‡,
 Thay gat upon the gammis §,
 Quhyle bludy berkit wes thair baird,
 As thay had worriet lammis
 Maist lyk,
 At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ The wyves keft up a hideous yell,
When all thir younkeris yokkit,
Als ferfs as ony fyre flaughts || fell,
Freiks & to the field thay flokit ;

The

* On the howis, or houghs.

† Unhappy, mischievous. G. D.—Foolish. Skene.

‡ When their cheeks or gabs were bare or undefended.

§ They got upon the gammis, or gums.

|| Flashes of lightning.

♪ Light-headed, freakish, forward fellows. Rud. Gloss.
G. Doug.

The carlis with clubbis cou'd udir quell,
Quhyld blude at breiftis out bokkit *,
Sa rudely rang the common bell,
Quhyll all the steipill rokit †
For reid ‡,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Quhyn thay had berit § lyk baitit bullis,
And branewod || brynt in bails d,
Thay wer als meik as ony mulis
That mangit wer with mailis e ;
For faintnes tha forfochtin fulis θ
Fell down lyk flauchtir failis ξ,

And

* Vomited.

† Shook.

‡ Or rade, warfare. Hence the "raid of Ruthven;" the "raid of the Reid-squair;" skirmishes or scuffles.

§ Perhaps bearded or baited each other like bulls.

|| Or distempered in their brains.

ð In flames :— the phrase seems now quite obsolete. Rud.
Gloss. G. Doug. vo. Becl. G. C.

ε Meek as mules that are tired, and manged or galled with
mails, or heavy burdens.

0 These fools that had tired themselves with fighting.

ξ Or turfs cast with a spade well known in Scotland, called the *flauchter-spade*.

And fresch men cam in and hail'd the dulis*,
And dang tham down in dailis †
Bedene ‡,
At Christis Kirk, &c.

“ Quhen all wes done, Dik wiȝh ane aix
 Cam furth to fell a fuddir §,
 Quod he, ‘ Quhair ar yon hangit smaix ||,
 ‘ Rycht now wald flane my bruder :’
 His wyf bad him ga hame, Gib glaiks ¶,
 And sa did Meg his muder ;
 He turnit and gaif them bayth thair paikis **,
 For he durst ding nane udir,
 For feir,
 At Christis Kirk of the grene that day.”

* A well-known phrase at foot-ball : when the ball touches the goal or mark, the winner calls out ' Hail ! ' or it has hailed the dule or dail.

† Dangle them down in heaps.

‡ Or bedeen, instantly, out of hand.

ſ A load or heap. Perhaps from fourth, a vulgar Scots word for plenty, or many in number.

|| This epithet is now obsolete.

♫ Light-headed, foolish braggadochio.

For which he gave the women their pails, or a threatening scold, which is sometimes accompanied with blows; as he durst not ding or encounter any others.

1715.

CANTO II.*

BUT there had been mair blood and skaith,
 Sair harship and great spulie,
 And mony a ane had gotten his death
 By this unsonfie tooly,
 But that the bauld good-wife of Baith,
 Arm'd wi' a great kail gully,

Came

* The king having painted the rustic squabble, with an uncommon spirit, in a most ludicrous manner, in a stanza of verse the most difficult to keep the sense complete, as he has done, without being forced to bring in words for crambo's sake, where they return so frequently; I have presumed to imitate his majesty, in continuing the laughable scene. Ambitious to imitate so great an original, I put a stop to the war, called a congress, and made them sign a peace, that the world might have their picture in the more agreeable hours of drinking, dancing, and singing.—The following cantos were written, the one in 1715, the other in 1718; about 300 years after the first. Let no worthy poet despair of immortality; good sense will be always the same, in spite of the revolutions of fashion, and the change of language.

Came bellyflaught *, and loot an aith,
 She'd gar them a' be hooly †
 Fou fast that day.

Blyth to win aff fae wi' hale banes,
 Tho' mony had clow'r'd pows ;
 And draggl'd fae 'mang muck and stanes,
 They look'd like wirrykows :
 Quoth some, who maist had tint their aynds,
 " Let 's see how a' bowls rows ‡ :
 " And quat their brulziement at anes,
 " Yon gully is nae mows,
 " Forfooth this day."

Quoth Hutchon§, " I am well content,
 " I think we may do war ;
 " 'Till this time tomond I 'fe indent
 " Our claiths of dirt will fa'r ;
 " Wi' nevels I 'm amaißt fawn faint,
 " My chafts are dung a char."
 Then took his bonnet to the bent,
 And dadit aff the glar,
 Fou clean that day.

Tam

* Came in great haste, as it were flying full upon them with her arms full spread, as a falcon with expanded wings comes souffing upon her prey. † Desist immediately.

‡ A bowling-green phrase, commonly used when people would examine any affair that is a little ravelled.

§ Vide Canto I. He is brave, and the first man for an honourable peace.

Tam Taylor *, wha in time of battle,
 Lay as gin some had fell'd him,
 Gat up now wi' an unco rattle,
 As nane there durst a quell'd him :
 Bauld Bess flew till him wi' a brattle,
 And spite of his teeth held him
 Clofs by the craig, and with her fatal
 Knife fhored she would geld him,
 For peace that day.

Syne a' wi' ae consent shook hands,
 As they stood in a ring ;
 Some red their hair, some set their bands,
 Some did their fark-tails wring ;
 Then for a hap to shaw their brands,
 They did their minstrel bring,
 Where clever houghs like willi wands,
 At ilka blythsome spring,
 Lap high that day.

Claud Peki was na very blate,
 He stood nae lang a dreigh ;
 For by the wame he gripped Kate,
 And gar'd her gi'e a skreigh :

“ Had

* Vide Canto I. He is a coward, but would appear valiant when he finds the rest in peace.

“ Had aff,” quoth she, “ ye filthy flate,
 “ Ye stink o’ leeks, O feigh !
 “ Let gae my hands, I say, be quait ;”
 And vow gin she was skeigh
 And mim that day.

Now fettled goffies fat, and keen
 Did for fresh bickers birle * ;
 While the young fwankies on the green
 Took round a merry tirl :
 Meg Wallet wi’ her pinky een
 Gart Lawrie’s heart-strings dirle ;
 And fouk wad threap, that she did green
 For what wad gar her skirle
 And skreigh some day.

The manly miller, haff and haff †,
 Came out to shaw good will,
 Flang by his mittens and his staff,
 Cry’d, “ Gi’e me Paty’s Mill :”
 He lap bawk-hight ‡, and cry’d, “ Had aff,”
 They rees’d him that had skill ;
 “ He wad do ’t better,” quoth a cawff,
 “ Had he another gill
 “ Of usquebay.”

Furth

* Contributed for fresh bottles. † Half fuddled.

‡ So high as his head could strike the loft, or joining of the couples.

Furth started neist a pensy blade,
 And out a maiden took,
 They said that he was Falkland bred *,
 And danced by the book ;
 A souple taylor to his trade,
 And when their hands he shook,
 Ga'e them what he got frae his dad,
 Videlicet, the yuke;
 To claw that day.

When a' cry'd out he did fae weel,
 He Meg and Befs did call up ;
 The lasses babb'd about the reel,
 Gar'd a' their hurdies wallop,
 And swat like pownies when they speel
 Up braes, or when they gallop,
 But a thrawn knublock hit his heel,
 And wives had him to haul up,
 Haff fell'd that day.

But mony a pawky look and tale
 Gaed round when glowming hous'd them †,
 The ostler wife brought ben good ale,
 And bad the lasses rouze them :

“ Up

* He had been a journeyman to the king's taylor, and had seen court dancing.

† Twilight brought them into the house.

“ Up wi’ them lads, and I ’se be bail
“ They ’ll loo ye and ye touze them :”
Quoth gawfie, “ This will never fail
“ Wi’ them that this gate wooes them,
“ On sic a day.”

Syne stools and forms were drawn aside,
And up raise Willy Dadle,
A short-hought man, but fou o’ pride,
He said the fidler plaid ill :
“ Let ’s hae the pipes,” quoth he, “ beside ;”
Quoth a’, “ That is nae said ill.”
He fits the floor syne wi’ the bride,
To Cuttymun * and Treeladle,
Thick, thick, that day.

In the mean time in came the laird,
And by some right did claim
To kifs and dance wi’ Maufie Aird,
A dink and dortie dame :
But O poor Maufe was aff her guard,
For back gate frae her wame,
Beckin she loot a fearfu’ raird,
That gart her think great shame,
And blush that day.

Auld

* A tune that goes very quick.

Auld Steen led out Maggy Forfyth,
 He was her ain good brither ;
 And ilka ane was unco blyth,
 To see auld fouk fae clever.
 Quoth Jock, wi' laughing like to rive,
 " What think ye o' my mither ?
 " Were my dad dead, let me ne'er thrive
 " But she wad get anither
 " Goodman this day."

Tam Lutter had a muckle dish,
 And betwixt ilka tune,
 He laid his lugs in 't like a fish,
 And suckt till it was done :
 His bags were liquor'd to his wish,
 His face was like a moon * ;
 But he could get nae place to pish
 In, but his ain twa shoon,
 For thrang that day.

The letter gae of haly rhyme †,
 Sat up at the board-head,
 And a' he said was thought a crime
 To contradict indeed :

For

* Round, full, and shining. When one is staring full of drink, he is said to have a face like a full moon.

† The reader, or church precenter, who lets go, i. e. gives out the tune to be sung by the rest of the congregation.

For in clark lear he was right prime,
And cou'd baith write and read *,
And drank sae firm till ne'er a styme
He could keek on a bead †
Or book that day.

When he was strute, twa sturdy chieles,
Be 's oxter and be 's coller,
Help up frae cowping o' the creels ‡
The liquid logic scholar.
When he came hame his wife did reel,
And rampage in her choler,
With that he brake the spinning-wheel,
That cost a good rix-dollar
And mair, some say.

Near bed-time now, ilk weary wight
Was gaunting for his rest ;
For some were like to tine their fight,
Wi' sleep and drinking strest.
But ithers that were stomach-tight,
Cry'd out, " It was nae best

" To

* A rarity in those days.

† He could not count his beads, after the Roman Catholic manner, which was the religion then in fashion.

‡ From turning topsy-turvy.

“ To leave a supper that was dight
“ To brownies *, or a ghaist,
“ To eat or day.”

On whomelt tubs lay twa lang dails,
On them stood mony a goan,
Some fill'd wi' brachan, some wi' kail,
And milk het frae the loan.
Of daintiths they had routh and wale,
Of which they were right fon ;
But naithing wad gae down but ale
Wi' drunken Donald Don,
The smith, that day.

Twa times aught bannocks in a heap,
And twa good junts of beef,
Wi' hind and fore spaul of a sheep,
Drew whittles frae ilk sheath :
Wi' gravie a' their beards did dreep,
They kempit wi' their teeth ;

A keb-

* Many whimsical stories are handed down to us, by old women, of these brownies : they tell us, they were a kind of drudging spirits, who appeared in the shape of rough men, would have lain familiarly by the fire all night, threshed in the barn, brought a midwife at a time, and done many such kind offices : but none of them have been seen in Scotland, since the Reformation, as saith the wife John Brown.

A kebbuck fyn that maist could creep
Its lane pat on the sheaf *,
In stons that day.

The bride was now laid in her bed,
Her left leg ho was flung † ;
And Geordie Gib was fidgen glad,
Because it hit Jean Gunn :
She was his jo, and aft had said,
“ Fy, Geordie, had your tongue,
“ Ye’s ne’er get me to be your bride :”
But chang’d her mind when bung,
That very day.

Tehee ‡ ! quoth Touzie, when she saw
The cathel coming ben ;
It pyping het ged round them a’ ;
The bride she made a fen,
To fit in wyliccoat fae braw,
Upon her nether en ;

Her

* A cheefe full of crawling mites crowned the feast.

† The practice of throwing the bridegroom or the bride’s stocking when they are going to bed, is well known : the person whom it lights on is to be next married of the company.

‡ An interjection of laughter.

Her lad like ony cock did craw,
That meets a clockin hen *,
And blyth were they.

The fouter, miller, smith, and Dick,
Lawrie, and Hutchon bauld,
Carles that keep nae very strict
Be hours, tho' they were auld:
Nor cou'd they e'er leave aff that trick;
But whare good ale was fald,
They drank a' night, e'en tho' auld nick
Should tempt their wives to scald
Them for 't nieft day.

Was ne'er in Scotland heard or seen
Sic banqueting and drinkin,
Sic revelling and battles keen,
Sic dancing and sic jinkin,
And unco wark that fell at e'en,
Whan lasses were haff winkin,
They lost their feet and baith their een,
And maidenheads gaed linkin
Aff a' that day.

* A hatching hen.

1718.

CANTO III. *

Now frae th' east nook of Fife † the dawn
 Speel'd weftlines up the lift,
 Carles wha heard the cock had craw'n,
 Begoud to rax and rift ;
 And greedy wives wi' girning thrawn,
 Cry'd lasses up to thrift ;
 Dogs barked, and the lads frae hand
 Bang'd to their breeks like drift,
 Be break of day.

But

* Curious to know how my bridal folks would look next day after the marriage, I attempted this third Canto, which opens with a description of the morning ; then the friends come and present their gifts to the new-married couple ; a view is taken of one girl (Kirsh) who had come fairly off, and of Maufe who had stumbled with the laird ; next a scene of drinking is represented, and the young good-man is creeled ; then the character of the smith's ill-natured shrew is drawn, which leads in the description of riding the stang ; next Maggy Murdy has an exemplary character of a good wife-wife ; deep drinking and bloodless quarrels make an end of an old tale.

† Where day must break upon my company, if, as I have observed, the scene is at Lesly church.—The fact is, that Ramsay was mistaken in supposing that the scene lay near Lesly in Fife, instead of Lesly in Aberdeenshire. G. C.

But some who had been fou yestreen,
 Sic as the letter-gae,
 Air up had nae will to be seen,
 Grudgin their groat to pay *.
 But what aft fristed 's no forgeen,
 When fouk has nought to say;
 Yet sweer were they to rake their een †;
 Sic dizzy heads had they,
 And het that day.

Be that time it was fair foor days ‡,
 As fou 's the house could pang,
 To see the young fouk ere they raise,
 Gossips came in ding dang,
 And wi' a fofs aboon the claiths §,
 Ilk ane their gifts down flang:
 Twa toop-horn-spoons down Maggy lays,
 Baith muckle mow'd and lang,
 For kale or whey.

Her

* Payment of the drunken groat is very peremptorily demanded by the common people next morning; but if they frankly confess the debt due, they are passed for two pence.

† Rub open their eyes.

‡ Broad day-light.

§ They commonly throw their gifts of household furniture above the bed-clothes where the young folks are lying.

Her aunt a pair of tangs fush in,
Right bauld she spake and spruce ;
“ Gin your goodman shall make a din,
“ And gabble like a goose,
“ Shorin whan fou to skelp ye're skin,
“ Thir tangs may be of use ;
“ Lay them enlang his pow or shin,
“ Wha wins fyn may make roose,
“ Between you twa.”

Auld Bessie in her red coat braw,
Came wi' her ain oe Nanny,
An odd-like wife, they said, that saw
A moupin runckled granny :
She fley'd the kimmers ane and a',
Word gae'd she was na kanny *,
Nor wad they let Lucky awa,
'Till she was fou wi' branny,
Like mony mae.

Steen, fresh and fastin 'mang the rest,
Came in to get his morning,
Speer'd gin the bride had tane the test †,
And how she loo'd her corning ?

She

* It was reported she was a witch.

† I do not mean an oath of that name we all have heard of.

She leugh as she had fan a nest,
 Said, "Let a be ye'r scorning."
 Quoth Roger, "Fegs, I've done my best,
 "To ge'er a charge of horning*,
 "As well's I may."

Kind Kirsh was there, a kanty las,
 Black ey'd, black hair'd, and bonny;
 Right well red up and jimp she was,
 And wooers had fow mony:
 I wat na how it came to pass,
 She cudled in wi' Jonnie,
 And tumbling wi' him on the grafs,
 Dang a' her cockernonny
 A jee that day.

But Maufe begrutten was and bleer'd,
 Look'd thowless, dowf, and sleepy;
 Auld Maggy ken'd the wyte, and sneer'd,
 Caw'd her a poor daft heepy:
 "It's a wife wife that kens her weird,
 "What tho' ye mount the creepy†;
 "There a good lesson may be learn'd,
 "And what the war will ye be
 "To stand a day?

"Or

* Is a writ in the Scottish law, charging the debtor to make payment, on pain of rebellion.—N. B. It may be left in the lock-hole, if the doors be shut. † The stool of repentance.

“ Or bairns can read, they first maun spell,
 “ I learn’d this frae my mammy,
 “ And cooft a legen girth * mysel,
 “ Lang or I married Tammie :
 “ I ’fe warrand ye have a’ heard tell,
 “ Of bonny Andrew Lammy,
 “ Stiffly in loove wi’ me he fell,
 “ As soon as e’er he saw me—
 “ That was a day !”

Het drink, fresh butter’d caiks, and cheefe,
 That held their hearts aboon,
 Wi’ clafhes, mingled aft wi’ lies,
 Drave aff the hale forenoon :
 But, after dinner, an ye please,
 To weary not o’er soon,
 We, down to e’ening edge wi’ ease,
 Shall loup, and see what ’s done
 I’ the doup o’ day.

Now what the friends wad fain been at,
 They that were right true blue :
 Was e’en to get their wyfons wat,
 And fill young Roger fou † :

But

* Like a tub that loses one of its bottom hoops.

† It is a custom for the friends to endeavour, the next day after the wedding, to make the new-married man as drunk as possible.

But the bauld billy took his maut,
And was right stiff to bow ;
He fairly gae them tit for tat,
And scour'd aff healths anew,
Clean out that day.

A creel bout fou of muckle steins *
They clinked on his back,
To try the pith o' his rigg and reins,
They gart him cadge this pack.
Now as a sign he had tane pains,
His young wife was na flack,
To rin and ease his shoulder-bains,
And sneg'd the raips fou snack,
Wi' her knife that day.

Syne the blyth carles tooth and nail
Fell keenly to the wark ;
To ease the gantrees of the ale,
And try wha was maist stark ;
Till boord, and floor, and a' did fail,
Wi'

* For merrymment, 'a creel or basket is bound, full of stones, upon his back ; and, if he has acted a manly part, his young wife with all imaginable speed cuts the cords, and relieves him from the burthen ; if she does not, he is rallied for a fumbler.

Wi' spilt ale i' the dark ;
 Gart Jock's fit slide, he, like a fail,
 Play'd dad, and dang the bark
 Aff 's shins that day.

The fouter, miller, smith, and Dick *,
 Et cet'ra, clofs fat cockin,
 Till wasted was baith cash and tick,
 Sae ill were they to flocken :
 Gane out to pish in gutters thick,
 Some fell, and some gaed rockin,
 Sawny hang sneering on his stick,
 To see bauld Hutchon bockin
 Rainbows that day.

The smith's wife her black deary fought,
 And fand him skin and birn † :
 Quoth she, " This day's wark's be dear bought."
 He damn'd and gae a girn,
 Ca'd her a jade, and said she mucht
 " Gae hame and scum her kirn :
 " Whisht,

* Vide Canto II.

† She found him with all the marks of her drunken husband about him.

“ Whisht, ladren, for gin ye fay ought

“ Mair, Ife wind ye a pirn *,

“ To reel some day.”

“ Ye ’ll wind a pirn ! ye filly snool,

“ Wae worth ye’r drunken faul ;”

Quoth she, and lap out o’er a stool,

And caught him by the spaul.

He shook her, and sware muckle dool,

“ Ye ’s thole for this, ye scaul ;

“ Ife rive frae aff ye’r hips the hool,

“ And learn ye to be baul

“ On sic a day.”

“ Your tippanizing scant o’ grace,”

Quoth she, “ gars me gang duddy ;

“ Our nibour Pate fin break o’ day ’s

“ Been thumping at his studdy.

“ An it be true that some fowk says,

“ Ye ’ll girn yet in a woody.”

Syn wi’ her nails she rave his face,

Made a’ his black baird bloody

Wi’ scarts that day.

A gilpy

* A threatning expression, when one designs to contrive some malicious thing to vex you.

A gilpy that had seen the faught,
 I wat he was nae lang,
 Till he had gather'd seven or aught
 Wild hempies stout and strang;
 They frae a barn a kabar raught,
 Ane mounted wi' a bang,
 Betwisht twa's shoulders, and sat straught
 Upon 't, and rade the stang *
 On her that day.

The wives and gytlings a' spawn'd out
 O'er middings and o'er dykes,
 Wi' mony an unco skirl and shout,
 Like bumbees frae their bykes;
 Thro' thick and thin they scour'd about,
 Plashing thro' dubs and fykes,
 And sic a reird ran thro' the rout,
 Gart a' the hale town tykes
 Yamph loud that day.

But d' ye see fou better bred
 Was menf-fou Maggy Murdy,
 She her man like a lammy led
 Hame, wi' a well-wail'd wordy.

Fast

* The riding of the stang on a woman that hath beat her husband is as I have described it, by one's riding upon a fling, or long piece of wood, carried by two others on their shoulders; where, like a herald, he proclaims the woman's name, and the manner of her unnatural action.

Fast frae the company he fled,
As he had tane the sturdy * ;
She fleech'd him fairly to his bed,
Wi' ca'ing him her burdy,
Kindly that day.

But Lawrie he took out his nap
Upon a mow of pease ;
And Robin spew'd in 's ain wife's lap,
He said it gae him ease.
Hutchon with a three-lugged cap,
His head bizzzen wi' bees,
Hit Geordy a mislushios rap,
And brak the brig o' 's neese
Right fair that day.

Syne ilka thing gae'd arse o'er head,
Chanlers, boord, stools, and stowps,
Flew thro' the house wi' muckle speed,
And there was little hopes,
But there had been some ill-done deed,
They gat sic thrawart cowps :
But a' the skaith that chanc'd indeed,
Was only on their dowps,
Wi' faws that day.

Sae

* A disease among sheep that makes them giddy, and run off from the rest of the herd.

Sae whiles they toolied, whiles they drank,
Till a' their sence was smoor'd ;
And in their maws there was nae mank,
Upon the forms some fnoor'd :
Ithers frae aff the bunkers fank,
Wi' een like collops scor'd ;
Some ramm'd their noddles wi' a clank,
E'en like a thick-sculld lord,
On posts that day.

The young good-man to bed did clim
His dear the door did lock in ;
Crap down beyont him and the rim
O'er wame he clapt his dock on.
She fand her lad was not in trim,
And be this same good token,
That ilka member, lith and lim,
Was souple like a doken,
'Bout him that day *.

* Notwithstanding all this my public-spirited pains, I am well assured there are a few heavy heads, who will bring down the thick of their checks to the side of their mouths, and, richly stupid, alledge there are some things in it have a meaning.—Well, I own it ; and think it handfomer in a few lines to say something, than talk a great deal and mean nothing. Pray, is there any thing vicious or unbecoming in saying, “ Men’s “ liths and limbs are souple when intoxicated ? ” Does it not shew, that excessive drinking enervates and unhinges a man’s constitution, and makes him incapable of performing divine or
natural

natural duties.—There is the moral. And, believe me, I could raise many useful notes from every character, which the ingenious will presently find out.

- “ Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
- “ And rise to faults true critics dare not mend ;
- “ From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
- “ And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.” POPE.

Thus have I pursued these comical characters, having gentlemen's health and pleasure, and the good manners of the vulgar in view : the main design of comedy being to represent the follies and mistakes of low life in a just light, making them appear as ridiculous as they really are, that each who is a spectator may avoid being the object of laughter. Any body that has a mind to look four upon it may use their freedom.

- “ Not laugh, beasts, fishes, fowls, nor reptiles can :
- “ That 's a peculiar happiness of man :
- “ When govern'd with a prudent cheerful grace,
- “ 'Tis one of the first beauties of the face.”

1716.

ON WIT:

THE TALE OF THE MANTING LAD.

My Easy friends, since ye think fit,
This night to lucubrate on wit ;
And since ye judge that I compose
My thoughts in rhyme better than prose *,
I 'll give my judgment in a sang ;
And here it comes, be 't right or wrang.
But first of a' I 'll tell a tale,
That with my case runs parallel.

There was a manting lad in Fife,
Wha cou'd na' for his very life,
Speak without stammering very lang,
Yet never manted when he sang.
His father's kiln he anes saw burning,
Which gart the lad run breathless mourning ;
Hameward

* Being but an indifferent sort of an orator, my friends would merrily alledge that I was not so happy in prose as rhyme ; it was carried in a vote, against which there is no opposition, and the night appointed for some lessons on wit, I was ordered to give my thoughts in verse.

Hameward with cliver strides he lap,
To tell his daddy his mishap.
At distance, ere he reach'd the door,
He stood and rais'd a hideous roar.
His father, when he heard his voice,
Stept out and said, " Why a' this noise ?"
The calland gap'd and glowr'd about,
But no ae word cou'd he lug out.
His dad cry'd, kenning his defect,
" Sing, fang, or I shall break your neck :"
Then soon he gratify'd his fire,
And sang aloud, " Your kiln 's a-fire."

Now ye 'll allow there 's wit in that,
To tell a tale fae very pat.
Bright wit appears in mony a shape,
Which some invent, and others ape.
Some shaw their wit in wearing claiths,
And some in coining of new aiths ;
There 's crambo wit in making rhyme,
And dancing wit in beating time ;
There 's mettled wit in story-telling,
In writing grammar, and right spelling ;
Wit shines in knowledge of politics,
And, wow, what wit 's amang the critics !

So far, my mates, excuse me while I play
In strains ironic with that heav'nly ray,

Rays

Rays which the human intellect refine,
And makes the man with brilliant lustre shine,
Marking him sprung from origin divine.
Yet may a well-rigg'd ship be full of flaws,
So may loose wits regard no sacred laws :
That ship the waves will soon to pieces shake,
So 'midst his vices sinks the witty rake.
But when on first-rate virtues wit attends,
It both itself and virtue recommends,
And challenges respect where'er its blaze extends.

A PROLOGUE

SPOKEN AT THE ACTING OF THE ORPHAN AND THE CHEATS OF
SCAPIN, BY SOME YOUNG GENTLEMEN, IN 1719.

BRAW lads, and bonny lasses, welcome here ;
But wha 's to entertain ye ?—Never speer ;
Quietness is best ; tho' we be leal and true,
Good sense and wit 's mair than we dare avow.
Somebody says to some fowk, we 're to blame ;
That 'tis a scandal and black burning shame
To thole young callands thus to grow fae snack,
And lear—O mighty crimes !—to speak and act !
“ Stage plays,” quoth Duncie, “ are unco' things
“ indeed !”

He said, he gloom'd, and shook his thick boss head.
“ They 're papery, papery !” cry'd his nibour neist,
“ Contriv'd at Rome by some malignant priest,
“ To witch away fowk's minds frae doing well,
“ As faith Rab Ker, M'Millan, and M'Neil.”

But let them taulk :—in spite of ilk endeavour,
We 'll cherish wit, and scorn their fead or favour :
We 'll strive to bring in active eloquence,
Tho', for a while, upon our fame's expence :—

I 'm

I 'm wrang—our fame will mount with mettled
carles,

And for the rest, we 'll be aboon their snarls.

Knock down the fools, wha dare with empty rage
Spit in the face of virtue and the stage.

'Cause heretics in pulpits thump and rair,

Must naithing orthodox b' expected there?

Because a rump cut off a royal head,

Must not anither parli'ment succeed?

Thus tho' the drama 's aft debauch'd and rude,

Must we, for some are bad, refuse the good?

Answer me that ;—if there be ony log,

That 's come to keek upon us here incog.

Anes, twice, thrice—but now I think on 't, stay,

I 've something else to do, and must away.

This prologue was design'd for use and sport,

The chiel that made it, let him answer for 't.

AN EPILOGUE

AFTER THE ACTING OF THE DRUMMER.

OUR plays are done—now criticise and spare not;
And tho' you are not fully pleas'd, we care not.
We have a reason on our side, and that is,
Your treat has one good property—'tis gratis.
We 've pleas'd ourselves; and, if we have good
judges,
We value not a head where nothing lodges.
The generous men of sense will kindly praise us,
And, if we make a little snapper, raise us :
Such know the aspiring soul at manly dawn,
Abhors the sour rebuke and carping thrawn ;
But rises on the hope of a great name,
Up all the rugged roads that lead to fame.
Our breasts already pant to gain renown
At senates, courts, by arms, or by the gown ;
Or by improvements of paternal fields,
Which never-failing joy and plenty yields ;
Or by deep draughts of the Castalian springs,
To soar with Mantuan or Horatian wings.

Hey boys ! the day 's our ain, the ladies smile ;
Which over recompenses all our toil.

Delights

Delights of mankind ! tho' in some small parts
We are deficient, yet our wills and hearts
Are yours ; and, when more perfect, shall endeavour,

By acting better, to secure your favour :
To spinnets then retire, and play a few tunes,
'Till we get thro' our Gregories and Newtons ;
And, some years hence, we 'll tell another tale ;
'Till then, ye bonny blooming buds, farewell.

A PROLOGUE

*SPOKEN BY ANTHONY ASTON **,

THE FIRST NIGHT OF HIS ACTING IN WINTER 1726.

'T is I, dear Caledonians, blythsome Tony,
That oft, last winter, pleas'd the brave and bonny,
With medley, merry song, and comic scene :
Your kindness then has brought me here again,
After a circuit round the queen of isles,
To gain your friendship and approving smiles.
Experience bids me hope ;—tho' south the Tweed,
The dastards said, " He never will succeed :
" What ! such a country look for any good in !
" That does not relish plays, nor pork, nor pud-
" ding !"

Thus great Columbus, by an idiot crew,
Was ridicul'd at first for his just view ;
Yet his undaunted spirit ne'er gave ground,
'Till he a new and better world had found.
So I—laugh on—the simile is bold ;
But faith 't is just : for 'till this body 's cold,
Columbus like, I 'll push for fame and gold.

* Commonly called Tony Aston. He was bred an attorney, and afterwards became a strolling player of considerable powers in low comedy. He wrote a comedy called " Love in a Hurry," in 1709.

A PROLOGUE

BEFORE THE ACTING OF AURENZEBE, AT HADINGTON SCHOOL,
IN 1727.

BE hush, ye croud, who pressing round appear
Only to stare ;—we speak to those can hear
The nervous phrase, which raises thoughts more
 high,
When added action leads them thro' the eye.
To paint fair virtue, humours, and mistakes,
Is what our school with pleasure undertakes,
'Thro' various incidents of life, led on,
By Dryden and immortal Addison ;
'These study'd men, and knew the various
 springs,
That mov'd the minds of coachmen, and of
 kings.
Altho' we 're young, allow no thought so mean,
That any here 's to act the Harlequin ;
We leave such dumb-show mimicry to fools,
Beneath the sp'rit of Caledonian schools.
Learning 's our aim, and all our care to reach
At elegance and gracefulness of speech,
And the address, from bashfulness refin'd,
Which hangs a weight upon a worthy mind.

The

The grammar 's good, but pedantry brings down
The gentle dunce below the sprightly clown.
“ Get seven score verse of Ovid's Trist by heart,
“ To rattle o'er, else I shall make ye smart,”
Cry snarling dominies that little ken ;
Such may teach parrots, but our Lesly * men.

* Mr. John Lesly, master of the school of Hadington ;
a gentleman of true learning, who, by his excellent method,
most worthily fills his place.

AN EPILOGUE

SPOKEN AFTER ACTING THE ORPHAN AND THE GENTLE SHEPHERD,

IN JANUARY 1729.

PATIE speaks.

LIFE's but a farce at best, and we to-day
 Have shewn you how the different stations play.
 Each palace is a stage, each cot the fame;
 And lords and shepherds differ but in name:
 In every sphere like passions rule the soul,
 And love, and rage, and grief, and joy, the whole.
 In these they tally.—Yet our fables show
 There's oft vast odds betwixt high life and low;
 For artful guile, ambition, hate, and pride,
 Give less disturbance to the inferior side.
 Monimia falls—while Peggy on the plain
 Enjoys her wishes with her faithful swain.

Thus we can moralize:—the end's design'd,
 To firm our look, and brighten up the mind;
 To please our beauteous audience, and improve
 Our art of speech, with all the force to move.
 We'll sing the rest.—Come knight, and partner
 fair,
 Let's close our entertainment with an air.

PATIE

PATIE sings.

(To the tune of "Bessy Bell.")

Thus, let us study day and night,
To fit us for our station,
That, when we 're men, we parts may play,
Are useful to our nation.

CHORUS.

For now 's the time, when we are young,
To fix our views on merit,
Water its buds, and make the tongue
And action suit the spirit.

PEGGY sings.

This all the fair and wise approve,
We know it by your smiling ;
And while we gain respect and love,
Our studies are not toiling.

CHORUS.

Such application gives delight,
And in the end proves gainful ;
'T is but the dull and lifeless wight
Thinks labour hard and painful.

SIR WILLIAM sings.

Then never let us think our time
And care, when thus employ'd,
Are thrown away ; but deem 't a crime
When youth 's by sloth destroy'd.

CHORUS.

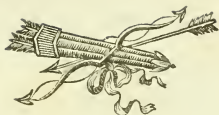
'Tis only active souls can rise
To fame, and all that 's splendid ;
And favourites of these conquering eyes,
'Gainst whom no heart 's defended.





SATIRIC.





1721.

LUCKY SPENCE'S LAST ADVICE *.

THREE times the carline grain'd and rifted,
Then frae the cod her pow she lifted,
In bawdy policy well gifted,
When she now fan,
That death nae longer wad be shifted,
She thus began :

My

* Lucky Spence, a famous bawd, who flourished for several years about the beginning of the eighteenth century. She had her lodgings near Holyrood House : she made many a benefit-night to herself, by putting a trade into the hands of young lasses that had a little pertness, strong passions, abundance of laziness, and no forethought.

My loving lasses, I maun leave ye,
 But dinna wi' your greeting grieve me,
 Nor wi' your draunts and droning deave me,
 But bring 's a gill :
 For faith, my bairns, ye may believe me,
 'T is 'gainst my will.

O black-ey'd Befs, and mim-mou'd * Meg,
 O'er good to work, or yet to beg,
 Lay funkets up for a fair leg ;
 For when ye fail,
 Ye'r face will not be worth a feg,
 Nor yet ye'r tail.

Whane'er ye meet a fool that 's fou,
 That ye 're a maiden gar him trow,
 Seem nice, but stick to him like glue ;
 And when set down,
 Drive at the jango till he spew,
 Syne he 'll sleep fown.

When he 's asleep, then dive and catch
 His ready cash, his rings, or watch ;
 And gin he likes to light his match †

At

* Expresses an affected modesty, by a preciseness about the mouth.

† I could give a large annotation on this sentence, but do not incline to explain every thing, lest I disoblige future critics, by leaving them nothing to do.

At your spunk-box,
 Ne'er stand to let the fumbling wretch
 E'en take the pox.

Cleek a' ye can by hook or crook,
 Ryp ilky pouch frae nook to nook;
 Be fure to truff his pocket-book;
 Saxty pounds Scots
 Is nae deaf nits*; in little bouk
 Lie great bank notes.

To get amends of whindging fools †,
 That 's frightened for repenting-stools,
 Wha often whan their metal cools,
 Turn sweer to pay,
 Gar the kirk-boxie hale the dools ‡,
 Anither day.

But

* Or empty nuts: this is a negative manner of saying a thing is substantial.

† To be revenged of fellows who wear the wrong side of their faces outmost, pretenders to sanctity, who love to be smuggling in a corner.

‡ Inform against them to the kirk-treasurer. "Hale the dools" is a phrase used at foot-ball, where the party that gains the goal or dool, is said to hale it, or win the game, and so draws the stake.

But dawt red-coats, and let them scoup,
 Free for the fou of cutty stoup * ;
 To gee them up, ye need na hope
 E'er to do weel :
 They 'll rive ye'r brats, and kick your doup,
 And play the deel.

There 's ae fair crofs attends the craft,
 That curst correction-house, where aft
 Wild hangy's taz † ye'er riggings fast
 Makes black and blae,
 Enough to pit a body daft ;
 But what 'il ye say ‡ ?

Nane gathers gear withoutten care,
 Ilk pleasure has of pain a share ;
 Suppose then they should tirl ye bare,
 And gar ye fike ;
 E'en learn to thole ; 'tis very fair
 Ye 're nibour like.

Forby,

* Little pot ; i. e. a gill of brandy.

† If they perform not the task assigned them, they are whipt by the hangman.

‡ The emphasis of this phrase, like many others, cannot be fully understood but by a native : its nearest meaning is, " But
 " there is no help for it—so it must be."

Forby, my looves, count upo' loffes,
 Ye'r milk-white teeth, and cheeks like rofes,
 Whan jet-black hair and brigs of nofes
 Faw down wi' dads,
 To keep your hearts up 'neath sic croffes,
 Set up for bawds.

Wi' well-criff'd loofs I hae been canty,
 Whan e'er the lads wad fain ha'e faun t' ye,
 To try the auld game taunty-raunty,
 Like coofers keen,
 They took advice of me, your aunty,
 If ye were clean.

Then up I took my filler ca',
 And whistl'd benn *, whiles ane whiles twa ;
 Roun'd in his lug †, that there was a
 Poor country Kate,
 As halefome as the wall of Spa,
 But unka blate.

Sae

* “ Butt and benn ” signify different ends or rooms of a house : to “ gang butt and benn,” is to go from one end of the house to the other.

† Whispered in his ear.

Sae when e'er company came in,
 And were upo' a merry pin,
 I flade awa' wi' little din,
 And muckle menfe *,
 Left conscience judge †, it was a' ane
 To Lucky Spence.

My bennifon come on good doers,
 Who spend their cash on bawds and whores ;
 May they ne'er want the wale of cures
 For a fair snout ;
 Foul fa' the quacks wha that fire smoors ‡,
 And puts nae out.

My malifon light ilka day
 On them that drink and dinna pay,
 But tak' a snack and run away ;

May

* Much good-breeding.

† It was her usual way of vindicating herself, to tell ye,
 " When company came to her house, could she be so uncivil
 " as to turn them out ?—If they did any bad thing," said she,
 " between God and their conscience be it."

‡ Such quacks as bind up the external symptoms of the disease, and drive it inward to the strong holds, whence it is not so easily expelled.

May 't be their hap
Never to want a gonorrhea,
Or rotten clap.

Lafs, gi'e us in anither gill,
A mutchken, jo, let 's tak' our fill;
Let Death fyne registrate his bill
Whan I want fenfe,
I 'll flip away with better will,
Quo' Lucky Spence.

1728.

THE LAST SPEECH OF A WRETCHED MISER.

O DOOL ! and am I forc'd to die,
And nae mair my dear filler see,
That glanc'd fae sweetly in my e'e !
 It breaks my heart :
My goud ! my bands ! alackanie !
 That we should part.

For you I labour'd night and day,
For you I did my friends betray,
For you on stinking caff I lay,
 And blankets thin ;
And for your sake fed mony a flea
 Upon my skin.

Like Tantalus, I lang have stood
Chin-deep into a filler flood,
Yet ne'er was able for my blood,
 But pain and strife,
To ware ae drap on claiths or food,
 To cherish life.

Or

Or like the wiffen'd beardless wights,
Wha herd the wives of eastern knights,
Yet ne'er enjoy the fast delights
 Of lasses bony ;
Thus did I watch lang days and nights
 My lovely money.

Altho' my annual rents could feed
Thrice forty fouk that stood in need,
I grudg'd myself my daily bread ;
 And if frae hame,
My pouch produc'd an ingan head,
 To please my wame.

To keep you cosie in a hoord,
This hunger I with ease endur'd ;
And never dought a doit afford
 To ane of skill,
Wha for a doller might have cur'd
 Me of this ill.

I never wore my claiths with brushing,
Nor wrung away my farks with washing ;
Nor ever sat in taverns dashing
 Away my coin,
To find out wit or mirth by clashing
 O'er dearthfu' wine.

Abiet my pow was bald and bare,
I wore nae frizzl'd limmer's hair,
Which taks of flour to keep it fair,
 Frae reefing free,
As meikle as wad dine, and mair,
 The like of me.

Nor kept I fervants, tales to tell,
But toom'd my coodies a' mysell ;
To hane in candle I had a spell
 Baith cheap and bright,
A fish-head, when it 'gins to smell,
 Gives curious light.

What reason can I shaw, quo' ye,
To save and starve, to cheat and lie,
To live a beggar, and to die
 Sae rich in coin ?
That 's mair than can be gi'en by me,
 Tho' Belzie join.

Some said my looks were groff and fowr,
Fretfu', drumbly, dull, and dour :
I own it was na in my pow'r,
 My fears to ding ;
Wherefore I never could endure
 To laugh or sing.

I ever hated bookish reading,
And musical or dancing breeding,
And what 's in either face or cleading,
Of painted things ;
I thought nae pictures worth the heeding,
Except the king's.

Now of a' them the eard e'er bure,
I never rhymers could endure,
They 're sic a sneering pack, and poor,
I hate to ken 'em ;
For 'gainst us thrifty fauls they 're sure
To spit their venom.

But waster wives, the warft of a',
Without a yeuk they gar ane claw,
When wickedly they bid us draw
Our filler spungs,
For this and that, to mak' them braw,
And lay their tongues.

Some loo the courts, some loo the kirks,
Some loo to keep their skins frae lirks,
Some loo to woo beneath the birks
Their lemans bony ;
For me, I took them a' for stirks
That loo'd na money.

They ca'd me slave to usury,
Squeeze, cleave the hair, and peel the flea,
Clek, flae the flint, and penury,
And faulelefs wretch ;
But that ne'er skaith'd or troubled me,
Gin I grew rich.

On profit a' my thoughts were bent,
And mony thoufands have I lent,
But sickerly I took good tent,
That double pawns,
With a cudeigh, and ten per cent.
Lay in my hands.

When borrow'rs brak, the pawns were rug,
Rings, beads of pearl, or filler jug,
I fald them aff, ne'er fash'd my lug
With girns or curses,
The mair they whing'd, it gart me hug
My fwelling purfes.

Sometimes I'd figh, and ape a faint,
And with a lang rat-rhime of cant,
Wad make a mane for them in want ;
But for ought mair,
I never was the fool to grant
Them ony skair.

I thought

I thought ane freely might pronounce
That chiel a very filly dunce,
That cou'd not honesty renunce,
 With ease and joys,
At ony time, to win an unce
 Of yellow boys.

When young I some remorse did feel,
And liv'd in terror of the deel,
His furnace, whips, and racking-wheel;
 But by degrees
My conscience, grown as hard as steel,
 Gave me some ease.

But fears of want, and carking care
To save my stock, and thirst for mair,
By night and day oppress me fair,
 And turn'd my head;
While friends appear'd like harpies gare,
 That wish'd me dead.

For fear of thieves I aft lay waking
The live lang night, 'till day was breaking,
Syne throu' my sleep, with heart fair aiking,
 I 've aften started,
Thinking I heard my windows cracking,
 When Elspa f——.

O gear ! I held ye lang the gither ;
For you I starv'd my good auld mither,
And to Virginia fald my brither,
 And crush'd my wife ;
But now I 'm gawn I kenna whither,
 To leave my life.

My life ! my god ! my spirit earns,
Not on my kindred, wife, or bairns,
Sic are but very laigh concerns,
 Compar'd with thee ;
When now this mortal rattle warns
 Me, I maun die.

It to my heart gaes like a gun,
To see my kin and graceless son,
Like rooks, already are begun
 To thumb my gear,
And cash that has na seen the fun
 This fifty year.

Oh ! oh ! that spendthrift son of mine,
Wha can on roasted moorfowl dine,
And like dub-water skink the wine,
 And dance and sing ;
He 'll soon gar my dear darlings dwine
 Down to naithing.

To that same place, where'er I gang,
O could I bear my wealth along!
Nae heir shou'd e'er a farthing fang,
That thus carouses,
Tho' they shou'd a' on woodies hang,
For breaking houses.

Perdition! Sathan! is that you?
I sink—am dizzy—candle blue!——
Wi' that he never mair play'd pew,
But with a rair,
Away his wretched spirit flew,
It maksnae where.

1721.

THE SCRIBLERS LASHED.

THAT I thus prostitute my muse
On theme so low, may gain excuse ;
When following motives shall be thought on,
Which have this doggrel fury brought on.
I 'm call'd in honour to protect
The fair when treat with disrespect ;
Besides, a zeal transports my soul,
Which no constraint can e'er control ;
In service of the government,
To draw my pen and satire vent,
Against vile mungrels of Parnassus,
Who through impunity oppress us.
'Tis to correct this scribbling crew,
Who, as in former reigns, so now
Torment the world, and load our time
With jargon cloth'd in wretched rhyme ;
Disgrace of numbers !—earth ! I hate them :
And as they merit, so I 'll treat them.

And first, these ill-bred things I lash,
That hated authors of the trash,

In

In public spread with little wit,
 Much malice, rude, and bootless spite,
 Against the sex who have no arms
 To shield them from insulting harms,
 Except the lightning of their eye,
 Which none but such blind dolts defy.

Ungen'rous war! t' attack the fair :
 But, ladies, fear not ; ye 're the care
 Of ev'ry wit of true descent,
 At once their song and ornament :
 They 'll ne'er neglect the lovely crowd ;
 But 'spite of all the multitude
 Of scribbling fops, assert your cause,
 And execute Apollo 's laws :
 Apollo, who the bard inspires
 With softest thoughts and divine fires ;
 Than whom, on all the earth, there 's no man
 More complaisant to a fine woman.
 Such veneration, mixt with love,
 Points out a poet from above.
 But Zanies, void of sense and merit,
 Love, fire, or fancy, wit, or spirit ;
 Weak, frantic, clownish, and chagreen,
 Pretending, prompt by zealous spleen,
 T' affront your head-dress, or your bone-fence,
 Make printers' presses groan with nonsense :
 But while Sol's offspring lives, as soon
 Shall they pull down his sister moon.

They

They with low incoherent stuff,
Dark sense, or none, lines lame and rough,
Without a thought, air, or address,
All the whole loggerhead confess.
From clouded notions in the brain,
They scribble in a cloudy strain ;
Desire of verse they reckon wit,
And rhyme without one grain of it.
Then hurry forth in public town
Their scrawls, lest they should be unknown :
Rather than want a fame, they choose
The plague of an infamous muse.
Unthinking, thus the fots aspire,
And raise their own reproach the high'r ;
By meddling with the modes and fashions
Of women of politest nations.
Perhaps by this they 'd have it told us,
That in their spirit something bold is,
To challenge those who have the skill,
By charms to save, and frowns to kill.

If not ambition, then 'tis spite
Which makes the puny insects write :
Like old and mouldy maids turn'd sour,
When distant charms have lost their pow'r,
Fly out in loud transports of passion,
When aught that's new comes first in fashion ;
'Till by degrees it creeps right snodly,
On hips and head-dress of the g—y :

Thus

Thus they to please the fighting sisters,
 Who often beat them in their misters *,
 With their malicious breath set sail,
 And write these filly things they rail.
 Pimps ! such as you can ne'er extend
 A flight of wit, which may amend
 Our morals ; that 's a plot too nice
 For you, to laugh folks out of vice.
 Sighing " Oh hey !" ye cry, " Alas !
 " This fardingale 's a great disgrace !"
 And all, indeed, because an ankle
 Or foot is seen, might monarchs mangle ;
 And makes the wife, with face upright,
 Look up, and bless Heav'n for their fight.

In your opinion nothing matches—
 O horrid sin ! the crime of patches !—
 'Tis false, ye clowns ; I 'll make 't appear,
 The glorious fun does patches wear :
 Yea, run thro' all the frame of nature,
 You 'll find a patch for ev'ry creature :
 Ev'n you yourselves, you blacken'd wretches,
 To Heliconians are the patches.

But grant that ladies' modes were ills
 To be reform'd, your creeping skills,

Ye

* Oblige them upon occasion.

Ye rhymers never would succeed,
Who write what the polite ne'er read.
To cure an error of the fair,
Demands the nicest prudent care ;
Wit utter'd in a pleasant strain,
A point so delicate may gain :
But that 's a task as far above
Your shallow reach, as I 'm from Jove.

No more then let the world be vexed
With baggage empty and perplexed ;
But learn to speak with due respect
Of Peggie's breasts and ivory neck.
Such purblind eyes as yours, 'tis true,
Shou'd ne'er such divine beauties view.
If Nellie's hoop be twice as wide,
As her two pretty limbs can stride ;
What then ? will any man of sense
Take umbrage, or the least offence,
At what e'en the most modest may
Expose to Phœbus' brightest ray ?
Does not the handsome of our city,
The pious, chaste, the kind, and witty,
Who can afford it great and small,
Regard well-shapen fardingale ?
And will you, magpies, make a noise ?
You grumble at the ladies' choice !
But leave 't to them, and mothers wise,
Who watch'd their conduct, mien, and guise,

To

To shape their weeds as fits their ease,
And place their patches as they please.
'This should be granted without grudging,
Since we all know they 're best at judging,
What from mankind demands devotion,
In gesture, garb, free airs, and motion.
But you, unworthy of my pen !
Unworthy to be class'd with men !
Haste to Caffar', ye clumsy fots,
And there make love to Hottentots.

Another set with ballads waste
Our paper, and debauch our taste
With endless 'larums on the street,
Where crowds of circling rabble meet.
The vulgar judge of poetry,
By what these hawkers sing and cry ;
Yea, some who claim to wit amiss,
Cannot distinguish that from this :
Hence poets are accounted now,
In Scotland, a mean empty crew,
Whose heads are craz'd, who spend their time
In that poor wretched trade of rhyme :
Yet all the learn'd discerning part
Of mankind own the heav'nly art
Is as much distant from such trash
As 'lay'd Dutch coin from sterling cash.

Others

Others in lofty nonsense write,
Incomprehensible 's their flight ;
Such magic pow'r is in their pen,
They can bestow on worthless men
More virtue, merit, and renown,
Than ever they cou'd call their own.
They write with arbitrary power,
And pity 'tis they should fall lower ;
Or stoop to truth, or yet to meddle
With common sense, for crambo diddle.

But none of all the rhyming herd
Are more encourag'd and rever'd,
By heavy souls to theirs ally'd,
Than such who tell who lately died.
No sooner is the spirit flown
From its clay cage to lands unknown,
Than some rash hackney gets his name,
And thro' the town laments the fame :
An honest burghers cannot die,
But they must weep in elegy :
Even when the virtuous soul is soaring
Thro' middle air, he hears it roaring.

These ills, and many more abuses,
Which plague mankind, and vex the muses,
On pain of poverty shall cease,
And all the fair shall live in peace :

And

And every one shall die contented,
Happy when not by them lamented.
For great Apollo, in his name,
Has order'd me thus to proclaim :

“ Forasmuch as a grov’ling crew,
“ With narrow mind, and brazen brow,
“ Wou’d fain to poet’s title mount,
“ And with vile maggots rub affront
“ On an old virtuoso nation,
“ Where our lov’d Nine maintain their station ;
“ We order strict, that all refrain
“ To write, who learning want, and brain ;
“ Pedants, with Hebrew roots o’ergrown,
“ Learn’d in each language but their own ;
“ Each spiritless half-starving sinner,
“ Who knows not how to get his dinner ;
“ Dealers in small ware, clinks, whim-whams,
“ Acrostics, puns, and anagrams ;
“ And all who their productions grudge,
“ To be canvass’d by skilful judge,
“ Who can find out indulgent trip,
“ While ’tis in harmless manuscript :
“ But to all them who disobey,
“ And jog on still in their own way,
“ Be ’t kend to all men that our will is,
“ Since all they write so wretched ill is,
“ They must dispatch their shallow ghosts
“ To Pluto’s jakes, and take their posts,
“ There

“ There to attend till Dis shall deign
“ To use their works—the use is plain.”

Now know, ye scoundrels, if ye stand
To huph and ha at this command,
The furies have prepar'd a halter,
To hang, or drive ye helter skelter,
Thro' bogs and moors, like rats and mice,
Pursu'd with hunger, rags, and lice,
If e'er ye dare again to croak,
And god of harmony provoke :
Wherefore pursue some craft for bread,
Where hands may better serve than head ;
Nor ever hope in verse to shine,
Or share in Homer's fate or ——.

WEALTH, OR THE WOODY:

A POEM ON THE SOUTH SEA.

THALIA *, ever welcome to this isle,
 Descend, and glad the nation with a smile :
 See frae yon bank where South Sea ebbs and
 flows,
 How sand-blind Chance woodies and wealth be-
 flows :
 Aided by thee, I 'll sail the wond'rous deep,
 And thro' the crowded alleys cautious creep.
 No easy task to plow the swelling wave,
 Or in stock-jobbing prefs my guts to save ;
 But naithing can our wilder passions tame,
 Wha rax for riches or immortal fame.

Long had the grumblers us'd this murm'ring
 found,
 " Poor Britain in her public debt is drown'd !"
 At fifty millions late we started a',
 And, wow, we wonder'd how the debt wad fa' ;
But

* The cheerful muse, who delights to imitate the actions of mankind, and to produce the laughing comedy ; that kind of poetry which is ever acceptable to Britons.

But sonfy fauls, wha first contriv'd the way,
 With project deep our charges to defray,
 O'er and aboon it heaps of treasure brings,
 That fouk, by guesfs, become as rich as kings.
 Lang heads they were that first laid down the plan,
 Into whose bottom round anes headlang ran,
 'Till, overstock'd, they quat the sea, and fain wad
 been at land *.

Thus when braid flakes of snaw have clad the
 green,

Aften I have young sportive gilpies seen,
 The waxing ba' with meikle pleasure row,
 'Till past their pith it did unwieldy grow.

'Tis strange to think what changes may appear,
 Within the narrow circle of a year ;
 How can ae project, if it be well laid,
 Supply the simple want of trifling trade † !
 Saxty lang years a man may rack his brain,
 Hunt after gear baith night and day wi' pain,
 And die at last in debt, instead of gain.
 But, O South Sea ! what mortal mind can run
 'Thro' a' the miracles that thou hast done ?

Nor

* Land, in the time of this golden moment, was sold at forty-five or fifty years purchase.

† All manner of traffic and mechanics was at that time despised : subscriptions and transfers were the only commodities.

Nor scrimply thou thyfell to bounds confines,
 But like the sun on ilka party shines,
 To poor and rich, the fools as well as wife,
 With hand impartial stretches out the prize.

Like Nilus * swelling frae his unkend head,
 Frae bank to brae o'erflows ilk rig and mead,
 Instilling lib'ral store of genial sap,
 Whence sun-burn'd Gypsies reap a plenteous crap;
 Thus flows our sea, but with this diff'rence wide,
 But anes a year their river heaves his tide,
 Ours aft ilk day, t' enrich the common weal,
 Bangs o'er its banks, and dings Egyptian Nile.

Ye rich and wife, we own success your due,
 But your reverse their luck with wonder view † :
 How, without thought, these dawted pets of Fate
 Have jobb'd themselves into sae high a state,

By

* A river which crosses a great part of Africa, the spring head thereof was unknown till of late. In the month of June it swells and overflows Egypt : when it rises too high, the inundation is dangerous, and threatens a famine. In this river are the monstrous amphibious animals named crocodiles, of the same species with the late alligators of the South Sea, which make a prey of and devour all human creatures they can lay hold on.

† Poor fools !

By pure instinct fae leal the mark have hit,
Without the use of either fear or wit *.
And ithers wha last year their garrets kept,
Where duns in vision fash'd them while they slept,
Wha only durst in twilight, or the dark,
Steal to a common cook's with haff a mark,
A' their half stock :—now, by a kanny gale,
In the o'erflowing ocean spread their sail ;
While they in gilded gallies cut the tide,
Look down on fishers' boats wi' meikle pride †.

Mean time, the thinkers wha are out of play ‡,
For their ain comfort kenna what to say ;
That the foundation 's loofe fain wa'd they shaw,
And think na but the fabric soon will fa :
That 's but a sham—for inwardly they fry,
Vext that their fingers were na in the pye :

Faint-

* One was reckoned a timorous thinking fool, who took advice of his reason in this grand affair.

† Despised the virtuous design of propagating and carrying on a fishery, which can never fail to be a real benefit to Britain.

‡ Many of just thinking at that time were vexed to see themselves trudging on foot, when some others of very indifferent capacities were setting up gilded equipages : notwithstanding of all the doubts they formed against it, yet fretted because they were not so lucky as to have some shares.

Faint-hearted wights, wha dully stood afar,
 Tholling your reason great attempts to mar;
 While the brave dauntless of sic fetters free,
 Jumpt headlong glorious in the golden sea *;
 Where now, like gods, they rule each wealthy jaw,
 While you may thump your pows against the wa'.

On summer's e'en, the welkin cawm and fair,
 When little midges frisk in lazy air,
 Have ye not seen thro' ither how they reel,
 And time about how up and down they wheel?
 Thus eddies of stock-jobbers drive about,
 Upmost to-day, the morn their pipe 's put out.
 With pensive face, whene'er the market 's hy,
 Minutius cries, " Ah! what a gowk was I."
 Some friend of his wha wisely seems to ken †
 Events of causes mair than ither men,
 " Push for your interest yet, nae fear," he cries,
 " For South Sea will to twice ten hundred rise."
 Waes me for him that fells paternal land,
 And buys when shares the highest sums demand;
He

* Threw off all the fetters of reason, and plunged gloriously into confusion.

† With grave faces many at that time pretended they could demonstrate this hoped-for rise of South Sea.

He ne'er shall taste the sweets of rising stock,
Which faws neist day;—na help for 't, he is broke.

Dear Sea, be tenty how thou flows at fhams
Of Hogland Gad'rens * in their froggy dams,
Lest in their muddy bogs thou chance to sink,
Where thou may'st stagnate, syne of course maun
stink.

This I foresee, and time shall prove I 'm right,
For he 's nae poet wants the second fight;
When autumn's stores are ruck'd up in the yard,
And fleet and snaw dreeps down cauld winter's
beard;
When bleak November winds make forests bare,
And with splenetic vapours fill the air;
Then, then in gardens, parks, or silent glen,
When trees bear naithing else, they 'll carry men,
Wha shall like paughty Romans greatly swing
Aboon earth's disappointments in a string:
Sae ends the tow'ring faul that downa see
A man move in a higher sphere than he.

Happy

* The Dutch; whom a learned author of a late essay has endeavoured to prove to be descended after a strange manner from the Gaderens: which essay Lewis XIV. was mightily pleased with, and bounteously rewarded the author.

Happy that man wha has thrawn up a main,
 Which makes some hundred thoufands a' his ain,
 And comes to anchor on fo firm a rock,
 Britannia's credit, and the South Sea stock :
 Ilk blythfome pleafure waits upon his nod,
 And his dependants eye him like a god :
 Clofs may he bend champain frae e'en to morn,
 And look on cells of tippony with scorn :
 Thrice lucky pimps, or fmug-fac'd wanton fair,
 That can in a' his wealth and pleafure skair :
 Like Jove he fits, like Jove, high heav'n's goodman,
 While the inferior gods about him ftand,
 'Till he permits, with condefcending grace,
 That ilka ane in order take their place :
 Thus with attentive look mensfou they fit,
 'Till he fpeak firft, and fhaw some fhining wit ;
 Syne circling wheels the flattering gaffaw,
 As well they may, he gars their beards wag a' *.
 Imperial gowd ! what is 't thou canna grant ?
 Poffeft of thee, what is 't a man needs want ?
 Commanding coin ! there 's nothing hard to thee ;
 I canna guefs how rich fowk come to die.

Unhappy

* Feasts them at his own proper coft : hence the proverb,
 " 'Tis fair in ha' where beards wag a'."

Unhappy wretch! link'd to the threed-bare nine,
The dazzling equipage can ne'er be thine :
Destin'd to toil thro' labyrinths of verse,
Dar'st speak of great stock-jobbing as a farce.
Poor thoughtless mortal ! vain of airy dreams,
The flying horse, and bright Apollo's beams,
And Helicon's werth well thou ca'st divine,
Are naithing like a mistress, coach, and wine.

Wad some good patron, whase superior skill
Can make the South Sea ebb and flow at will,
Put in a stock for me, I own it fair,
In epic strain I 'd pay him to a hair ;
Immortalize him, and whate'er he loves,
In flowing numbers I shall sing " approves :"
If not, fox like, I 'll thraw my gab and gloom,
And ca' your hundred thousand a four plum *.

* The fox in the fable, that despised the plumbs he could not reach, is well known :—one hundred thousand pounds being called a plumb, makes this a right pun ; and some puns deserve not to be classed among low wit, though the generality of them do.

THE RISE AND FALL OF STOCKS IN 1720:

AN EPISTLE TO LORD RAMSAY.

MY LORD,

WITHOUTTEN preface or preamble,
 My fancy being on a ramble,
 Transported with an honest passion,
 Viewing our poor bambouzl'd nation,
 Biting her nails, her knuckles wringing,
 Her cheeks sae blae, her lips sae hinging;
 Grief and vexation 's like to kill her,
 For tyning baith her tick and filler.

Allow me then to make a comment
 On this affair of greatest moment,
 Which has fa'n out, my Lord, since ye
 Left Lothian and the Edgewell tree*:

And,

* An oak tree which grows on the side of a fine spring, nigh the castle of Dalhousie; very much observed by the country people, who give out, that before any of the family died, a branch fell from the Edgewell tree. The old tree, some few years ago, fell altogether; but another sprung from the same root, which is now tall and flourishing; and lang be it sae.

And, with your leave, I needna flicke
To say we 're in a forry pickle,
Since poortith o'er ilk head does hover
Frae John-a-Groat's house * south to Dover.
Sair have we pelted been with stocks,
Casting our credit at the cocks ;
Lang guilty of the highest treason
Against the government of reason ;
We madly, at our ain expences,
Stock-jobb'd away our cash and senses.

As little bairns frae winnocks hy
Drap down saip-bells to waiting fry,
Wha run and wrestle for the prize,
With face erect and watchfou eyes ;
The lad wha gleggest waits upon it,
Receives the bubble on his bonnet,
Views with delight the shining beau-thing,
Which in a twinkling bursts to nothing :
Sae Britain brought on a' her troubles,
By running daftly after bubbles.

Impos'd on by lang-nebit jugglers,
Stock-jobbers, brokers, cheating smugglers,
Wha set their gowden girns fae wylie,
Tho' ne'er fae cautious, they 'd beguile ye :

The

* The northmost house in Scotland.

The covetous infatuation
 Was smittle out o'er all the nation ;
 Clergy, and lawyers, and physicians,
 Mechanics, merchants, and musicians ;
 Baith sexes, of a' sorts and sizes,
 Drap ilk design, and jobb'd for prizes ;
 Frae noblemen to livery varlets,
 Frae topping toasts to hackney harlots :
 Poetic dealers were but scarce,
 Less browden still on cash than verse ;
 Only ae bard * to coach did mount,
 By singing praise to Sir John Blunt ;
 But since his mighty patron fell,
 He looks just like Jock Blunt himsel †.

Some lords and lairds sell'd riggs and castles,
 And play'd them aff with tricky rascals,
 Wha now with routh of riches vapour,
 While their late honours live on paper :
 But ah ! the difference 'twixt good land,
 And a poor bankrupt bubble's band.

Thus

* Vide Dick Francklin's epistle.

† This is commonly said of a person who is out of countenance at a disappointment.

Thus Europeans Indians rifle,
And give them for their gowd some trifle ;
As dewgs of velvet, chips of crystal,
A facon's bell, or baubee whistle.

Merchants' and bankers' heads gade wrang,
They thought to millions they might spang,
Despis'd the virtuous road to gain,
And look'd on little bills with pain ;
The well-win thousands of some years,
In ae big bargain disappears :
'Tis fair to bide, but wha can help it,
Instead of coach, on foot they skelp it.

The ten per cents wha durstna venture,
But lent great fums upon indenture,
To billies wha as frankly war'd it,
As they out of their guts had spar'd it ;
When craving money they have lent,
They 're answer'd, item, " A' is spent."
The miser hears him with a gloom,
Girns like a brock, and bites his thumb,
Syne shores to grip him by the wyson,
And keep him a' his days in prifon.
" Sae may ye do," replies the debtor,
" But that can never mend the matter ;
" As soon can I mount Charlewain,
" As pay ye back your gear again."

Poor

Poor Mouldy rins quite by himsel *,
And bans like ane broke loofe frae hell,
It lulls a wee my mullygrubs,
To think upon these bitten scrubs,
When naithing faves their vital low,
But the expences of a tow.

Thus children aft with carefu' hands,
In summer dam up little strands,
Collect the drizzel to a pool,
In which their glowing limbs they cool ;
'Till by comes some ill deedie gift †,
Wha in the bulwark makes a rift,
And with ae strake in ruins lays
The work of use, art, care, and days.

Even handycraftsmen too turn'd faucy,
And man be coaching 't thro' the caufy ;
Syne strut fou paughty in the alley,
Transferring thousands with some valley ;
Grow rich in fancy, treat their whore,
Nor mind they were, or shall be poor :
Like little Joves they treat the fair,
With gowd frae banks built in the air ;

For

* Mad ; out of his wits.

† A roguish boy, who is seldom without doing a bad action.

For which their Danaes * lift the lap,
And compliment them with a clap;
Which by aft jobbing grows a pox,
'Till brigs of noses fa' with stocks.

Here coachmen, grooms, or pavement trotter,
Glitter'd a while, then turn'd to snorter;
Like a shot starn, that thro' the air
Skyts east or west with unco glare,
But found neist day on hillock side,
Na better seems nor paddock ride.

Some reverend brethren left their flocks,
And sank their stipends in the stocks;
But tining baith, like Æsop's colly,
O'er late, they now lament their folly.

For three warm months, May, June, and July,
There was odd scrambling for the spulzy;
And mony a ane, 'till he grew tir'd,
Gather'd what gear his heart desir'd.
We thought that dealer's stock an ill ane,
That was not wordy haff a million.
O had this golden age but lasted,
And no fae soon been broke and blasted,

There

* Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos, to whom Jupiter descended in a shower of gold.

There is a person * well I ken,
Might wi' the best gane right far ben ;
His project better might succeeded,
And far less labour had he needed :
But 'tis a daffin to debate,
And aurgle-bargin with our fate.
Well, had this gowden age but lasted,
And not fae soon been broke and blasted,
O wow, my Lord, these had been days,
Which might have claimed your poet's lays ;
But soon, alake ! the mighty Dagon
Was seen to fa' without a rag on :
In harvest was a dreadfu' thunder,
Which gart a' Britain glowr and wonder ;
The phizzing bout came with a blatter,
And dry'd our great sea to a gutter.

But mony fowk with wonder speir,
What can become of a' the gear ?
For a' the country is repining,
And ilka ane complains of tyning.
Plain answer I had best let be,
And tell ye just a simile.

Like

* Meaning myself, with regard to my printing this volume by subscription.

Like Belzie when he nicks a witch,
Wha fells her faul she may be rich ;
He, finding this the bait to damn her,
Casts o'er her e'en his cheating glamour :
She signs and seals, and he affords
Her heaps of visionary hoords ;
But when she comes to count the cunzie,
'Tis a' fklate stanes instead of money.

Thus we've been trick'd with braw projectors,
And faithfu' managing directors,
Wha for our cash, the faul of trade,
Bonny propines of paper made ;
On footing clean, drawn unco' fair,
Had they not vanisht into air.

When South Sea tyde was at a hight,
My fancy took a daring flight * ;
Thalia, lovely muse, inspir'd
My breast, and me with foresight fir'd ;
Rapt into future months, I saw
The rich aërial Babel fa' ;
'Yond seas I saw the upstarts drifting,
Leaving their coaches for the lifting :

These

* " Wealth, or the Woody ;" wrote in the month of June
last.

These houses fit for wights gane mad,
I saw cramm'd fou as they cou'd had ;
While little fauls funk with despair,
Implor'd cauld death to end their care.
But now a sweeter scene I view,
Time has, and time shall prove it true ;
For fair Aftrea moves frae heav'n,
And shortly shall make a' odds even :
The honest man shall be regarded,
And villains as they ought rewarded.
The setting moon and rosie dawn
Bespeak a shining day at hand ;
A glorious sun shall soon arise,
To brighten up Britannia's skies :
Our king and senate shall engage
To drive the vultures off the stage ;
Trade then shall flourish, and ilk art
A lively vigour shall impart
To credit languishing and famisht,
And Lombard-street shall be replenisht.
Got safe ashore after this blast,
Britons shall smile at follies past.

God grant your Lordship joy and health,
Lang days, and rowth of real wealth ;
Safe to the land of cakes heav'n send ye,
And frae cros accidents defend ye.

1721.

THE SATYR'S COMIC PROJECT

FOR RECOVERING A BANKRUPT STOCK-JOBBER.

ON the shore of a low-ebbing sea *,
 A fighting young jobber was seen,
 Staring wishfully at an old tree,
 Which grew on the neighbouring green.
 There 's a tree that can finish the strife
 And disorder that wars in my breast,
 What need one be pain'd with his life,
 When a halter can purchase him rest ?

Sometimes he would stamp and look wild,
 Then roar out a terrible curse
 On bubbles that had him beguil'd,
 And left ne'er a doit in his purse.
 A satyr that wander'd along,
 With a laugh to his raving reply'd ;
 The savage maliciously fung,
 And jok'd while the stock-jobber cry'd.

To

* From the beginning to the 20th line, sing to the tune of "Colin's Complaint."—From the 21st line, where the satyr begins to speak, sing to the tune of "The kirk wad let me be."

To mountains and rocks he complain'd,
His cravat was bath'd with his tears ;
The satyr drew near like a friend,
And bid him abandon his fears :
Said he, Have ye been at the sea,
And met with a contrary wind,
That you rail at fair Fortune so free ?
Don't blame the poor goddess, she 's blind.

Come hold up thy head, foolish wight,
I 'll teach thee the loss to retrieve ;
Observe me this project aright,
And think not of hanging, but live.
Hecatissa conceited and old,
Affects in her airs to seem young,
Her jointure yields plenty of gold,
And plenty of nonsense her tongue.

Lay siege to her for a short space,
Ne'er mind that she 's wrinkled or grey ;
Extol her for beauty and grace,
And doubt not of gaining the day.
In wedlock you fairly may join,
And when of her wealth you are sure,
Make free with the old woman's coin,
And purchase a sprightly young w——.

1720.

BAGPIPES NO MUSIC :

BEING A SATIRE ON SCOTS POETRY.

As Dryden justly term'd poetic found,
A pacing Pegafus on carpet ground :
Roscommon's nervous sense your verses yield,
A courser bounding o'er the furrow'd field :
The track pursue, that thinking Scots may see
The comprehensive English energy.
Scotch Maggy may go down at Aberdeen,
Where bonnets, bag-pipers, and plaids are seen ;
But such poor gear no harmony can suit,
Much fitter for a Jew's trump than a lute.
Low bells, not lyres, the Highland cliffs adorn,
Macklean's loud halloo, or Mackgregor's horn.
Sooner shall China yield to earthen ware,
Sooner shall Abel teach a singing bear,
Than English bards let Scots torment their ear.
Who think their rustic jargon to explain,
For anes is once ; lang, long ; and two is twain ;
Let them to Edinburgh foot it back,
And add their poetry to fill their pack ;

While

While you, the fav'rite of the tuneful Nine,
Make English deeds in English numbers shine :
Leave Ramsay's clan to follow their own ways,
And while they mumble thistles, wear the bays.

JOHN COUPER.

GRUB-STREET NAE SATIRE.

AN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

DEAR John, what ails ye now?—lie still :
 Hout man ! what need ye take it ill,
 That Allan buried ye in rhyme,
 May be a start afore ye'r time * ?
 He 's naithing but a shire daft lick,
 And disna care a fiddlestick,
 Altho' your tutor Curl and ye
 Shou'd serve him sae in elegy.

Doup down, doild ghaist, and dinna fash us,
 With " carpet ground," and " nervous" clafhes ;
 Your Grub-street jargon Dryden wounds,
 When mixt with his poetic sounds.
 You pace on Pegasus ! take care,
 He 'll " bound o'er furrow'd fields " of air,
 And fling ye headlong frae the skies,
 Never a second time to rise :
 With sic a fa, alake ! ye 'll e'en a'
 Dash into sherds like broken China :

China

* See John Cowper's Elegy, p. 221.

China and men the same fate skair,
Ah me ! baith bruckle earthen ware.

Lang serv'd ye in a mettl'd station,
The foremost beagle of our nation,
For scenting out the yielding creature,
Wha us'd to play at whats-the-matter :
But now, O fye for shame ! to trudge
Mun Curle 's poor hackney scribbling drudge,
“ To fill his pack,” while you, right fair,
Gain title braw, “ his finging bear.”
But, John, wha taught ye ilka name,
That shines fae bonnily in fame,
Roscommon, Stanhope, Ramsay, Dryden,
Wha back of winged horse cou'd ride on ?
A' them we ken ; but wha the d—
Bad you up hill Parnassus speel ?

You Ramsay make a feckfu' man,
Ringleader of a hearty clan :
Goodfaith it sets ye well to fear him,
For gin ye etle anes to steer him,
He 'll gloom ye dead:—in “ rustic ” phrase,
He 'll gar his “ thistles ” rive your “ bays.”

PATE BIRNIE.

1728.

REASONS FOR NOT ANSWERING
THE HACKNEY SCRIBLERS.

THESE to my blyth indulgent friends,
Dull faes nought at my hand deserve :
To pump an answer 's a' their ends ;
But not ae line if they should starve.

Whae'er shall with a midding fight,
Of victory will be beguil'd ;
Dealers in dirt will be to dight,
Fa' they aboon or 'neath they 're fil'd.

It helps my character to heez,
When I 'm the butt of creeping tools ;
The warld, by their daft medley, sees
That I 've nae enemies but fools.

But fae it has been, and will be,
While real poets rise to fame,
Sic poor Macflecknos will let flee
Their venom, and still miss their aim.

Should

Should ane like Young or Somer'le write,
 Some canker'd coof can fay, 'tis wrang ;
 On Pope sic mungrels shaw'd their spite,
 And shot at Addifon their stang.

But well, dear Spec, the feckless asses,
 To wiest infect even'd and painted,
 Sic as by magnifying glaffes
 Are only kend when throu' them tented.

The blundering fellows ne'er forget,
 About my trade to feed their fancies,
 As if, forfooth, I wad look blate,
 At what my honour maist advances.

Auld Homer fang for 's daily bread ;
 Surprising Shakspeare fin'd the wool ;
 Great Virgil creels and baskets made ;
 And famous Ben employ'd the trowel.

Yet Dorset, Lansdown, Lauderdale *,
 Bucks, Stirling †, and the son of Angus ‡,
 Even monarchs, and of men the wale,
 Were proud to be inrow'd amang us.

Then

* The translator of Virgil.

† William Alexander earl of Stirling, the author of many dramatic pieces.

‡ Gawin Douglas bishop of Dunkeld, the celebrated translator of Virgil's *Æneid*. He was son of Archibald sixth earl of Angus.

Then, hackneys, write 'till ye gae wood,
Drudge for the hawkers day and night ;
Your malice cannot move my mood,
And equally your praise I flight.

I 've gotten mair of fame than 's due,
Which is secur'd amang the best ;
And should I tent the like of you,
A little faul wad be confest.

Nae mastiff minds a yamphing cur ;
A craig defies a frothy wave ;
Nor will a lion raise his fur,
Altho' a monkey misbehave ;

NAM SATIS EST EQUITEM MIHI PLAUDERE,

1728.

THE GENERAL MISTAKE:

INSCRIBED TO LORD ERSKINE.

THE finish'd mind in all its movements bright,
 Surveys the self-made sumph in proper light,
 Allows for native weaknefs, but difdains
 Him who the character with labour gains :
 Permit me then, my Lord, (fince you arife
 With a clear faul aboon the common fize,)
 To place the following sketches in your view ;
 The warld will like me if I 'm rees'd by you.

Is there a fool, frae fenator to fwain ?
 Take ilk ane's verdict for himfelf—there 's nane.
 A thoufand other wants make thoufands fret,
 But nane for want of wifdom quarrels fate.
 Alas ! how gen'ral proves the great miftake,
 When others thro' their neighbours' failings rake ;
 Detraction then by fpite is borne too far,
 And represents men warfe than what they are.
 Come then, Impartial Satire, fill the ftage
 With fools of ilka ftation, fex, and age ;

Point

Point out the folly, hide the person's name,
Since obduration follows public shame :
Silent conviction calmly can reform,
While open scandal rages to a storm.

Proceed ; but, in the list, poor things forbear,
Who only in the human form appear,
Scarce animated with that heav'nly fire
Which makes the soul with boundless thoughts
aspire :

Such move our pity—nature is to blame ;
'Tis fools, in some things wise, that satire claim ;
Such as Nugator—mark his solemn mien,
Stay'd are his features, scarcely move his een,
Which deep beneath his knotted eye-brows sink,
And he appears, as one wad guess, to think :
Even so he does, and can exactly shew
How many beans make five, take three awa :
Deep read in Latin folios four inch thick,
He probes your crabit points into the quick ;
Delights in dubious things to give advice,
Admires your judgment, if you think him wise ;
And stiffly stands by what he anes thought right,
Altho' oppos'd with reason's clearest light :
On him ilk argument is thrown away,
Speak what you will, he tents not what you say ;
He hears himself, and currently runs o'er
All on the subject he has said before ;

'Till

'Till glad to ease his jaws and tired tongue,
 Th' opponent rests ;—Nugator thinks him dung.
 Thou solemn trifler ! ken thou art despis'd,
 Thy stiff pretence to wisdom naething priz'd,
 By sic as can their notions fause decline,
 When truth darts on them with convicting shine.
 How hateful 's dull opinion, prop'd with words
 That nought to any ane of sense affords,
 But tiresome jargon !—Learn to laugh, at least,
 That part of what thou says may pass for jest.

Now turn your eye to smooth Chicander next,
 In whom good sense seems with good humour
 mixt ;

But only seems :—for envy, malice, guile,
 And sic base vices, crowd behind his smile ;
 Nor can his thoughts beyond mean quirks extend,
 He thinks a trick nae crime that gains his end :
 A crime ! no, 'tis his brag ; he names it wit,
 And triumphs o'er a better man he 's bit.
 Think shame, Chicander, of your creeping flights,
 True wisdom in sincerity delights ;
 The sumphish mob, of penetration shawl,
 May gape and ferly at your cunning faul,
 And make ye fancy that there is desert
 In thus employing a' your sneaking art ;
 But do not think that men of clearer sense
 Will e'er admit of sic a vile pretence,

To

To that which dignifies the human mind,
And acts in honour with the bright and blind.

Reverse of this fause face, observe yon youth,
A strict plain-dealer, aft o'er-stretching truth ;
Severely sour, he 's ready to reprove
The least wrang step in those who have his love ;
Yet what 's of worth in them he over-rates ;
But, much they 're to be pitied whom he hates :
Here his mistake, his weakest side appears,
When he a character in pieces tears,
He gives nae quarter, nor to great or sma',
Even beauty guards in vain, he lays at a'.
This humour, aften flowing o'er due bounds,
Too deeply mony a reputation wounds ;
For which he 's hated by the suffering crowd,
Who jointly 'gree to rail at him aloud,
And as much shun his sight and bitter tongue,
As they wad do a wasp that had them stung.
Censorious ! learn sometimes at faults to wink,
The wisest ever speak less than they think :
Tho' thus superior judgment you may vaunt,
Yet this proud wormwood shew o't speaks a want ;
A want in which your folly will be seen,
'Till you increase in wit, and have less spleen.

Make way there, when a mortal god appears !
Why do ye laugh ?—king Midas wore sic ears.

How

How wise he looks !—Well, wad he never speak,
 People wad think him neither dull nor weak :
 But ah ! he fancies, 'cause he 's chos'n a tool,
 That a furr'd gown can free him frae the fool ;
 Straight he with paughty mien and lordly glooms,
 A vile affected air, not his, assumes ;
 Stawks stiffly by when better men salute,
 Discovering less of senator than brute.
 Yet is there e'er a wiser man than he ?—
 Speer at himsell ; and, if he will be free,
 He 'll tell you, nane.—Will judges tell a lie ?

But let him pass, and with a smile observe
 Yon tatter'd shadow, amais't like to starve ;
 And yet he struts, proud of his vast engine :
 He is an author, writes exquisite fine ;
 Sae fine, in faith, that every vulgar head
 Cannot conceive his meaning while they read.
 He hates the world for this : with bitter rage,
 He damns the stupid dullness of the age.
 The printer is unpaid : booksellers swear
 Ten copies will not sell in ten lang year ;
 And wad not that fair fret a learned mind,
 To see those shou'd be patrons prove sae blind,
 Not to approve of what cost meikle pains,
 Neglect of bus'ness, sleep, and waste of brains ?
 And a' for nought but to be vilely us'd,
 As pages are whilk buyers have refus'd.

Ah !

Ah ! fellow-lab'ers for the prefs, take heed,
 And force nae fame that way, if ye wad speed :
 Mankind must be, we hae na other judge,
 And if they are displeas'd, why should we grudge ?
 If happily you gain them to your side,
 Then baldly mount your Pegafus and ride :
 Value yoursell what only they desire ;
 What does not take, commit it to the fire.

Next him a penman, with a bluffer air,
 Stands 'tween his twa best friends that lull his
 care,
 Nam'd " Money in baith Pouches ;"—with three
 lines,
 Yclept a bill, he digs the Indian mines ;
 Jobs, changes, lends, extorfes, cheats, and grips,
 And no ae turn of gainfu' us'ry slips,
 'Till he has won, by wife pretence and snell,
 As meikle as may drive his bairns to hell,
 His ain lang hame.—This fucker thinks nane wife,
 But him that can to immense riches rise :
 Lear, honour, virtue, and sic heavenly beams,
 To him appear but idle airy dreams,
 Not fit for men of business to mind,
 'That are for great and golden ends design'd.
 Send for him, de'el !—'Till then, good men, take
 care
 To keep at distance frae his hook and snare ;

He

He has nae rewth, if coin comes in the play,
He 'll draw, indorfe, and horn to death his prey.

Not thus Macfomno pushes after praise,
He treats, and is admir'd in all he says :
Cash well bestow'd, which helps a man to pass
For wise in his ain thinking, that 's an as :
Poor fkybalds ! curs'd with more of wealth than
wit,

Blyth of a gratis gaudeamus, fit
With look attentive, ready all about,
To give the laugh when his dull joke comes out :
Accustom'd with his conversation bright,
They ken, as by a watch, the time of night,
When he 's at sic a point of sic a tale,
Which to these parasites grows never stale,
Tho' often tald. Like Lethe's stream, his wine
Makes them forget—that he again may shine.

“ Fy ! satire, ha'd thy tongue, thou art too rude

“ To jeer a character that seems sae good :

“ This man may beet the poet bare and clung,

“ That rarely has a shilling in his spung.”

Hang him ! there 's patrons of good sense enew,

To cherish and support the tuneful few,

Whose penetration 's never at a loss

In right distinguishing of gold frae dross :

Employ me freely if thou 'd laurels wear,

Experience may teach thee not to fear.

But see anither gives mair cause for dread,
 He thraws his gab, and aft he shakes his head ;
 A slave to self-conceit and a' that 's sour,
 T' acknowledge merit is not in his pow'r.
 He reads, but ne'er the author's beauties minds,
 And has nae pleasure where nae faults he finds.
 Much-hated gowk ! tho' vers'd in kittle rules,
 To be a wirrykow to writing fools.
 They fell the greatest, only learn'd in words,
 Which naithing but the cauld and dry affords ;
 Dar'st thou of a' thy betters slighting speak,
 That have nae grutten sae meikle, learning Greek ?
 Thy depth 's well kend, and a' thy silly vaunts,
 To ilka solid thinker shaw thy wants.
 Thus cowards deave us with a thousand lies
 Of dang'rous vict'ries they have won in pleas :
 Sae shallow upstarts strive with care to hide
 Their mean descent, which inly gnaws their pride,
 By counting kin, and making endless faird,
 If that their grany's uncle's oye's a laird.
 Scarcrows ! hen-hearted ! and ye meanly born !
 Appear just what you are, and dread nae scorn ;
 Labour in words, keep hale your skins : why not ?
 Do well, and nane your laigh extract will quote,
 But to your praise. Walk aff, till we remark

Yon little coxy wight that makes sic wark
 With tongue and gait : how crouslly does he stand !
 His taes turn'd out, on his left haunch his hand ;
The

The right beats time a hundred various ways,
And points the pathos out in a' he says.
Wow! but he's proud, when amaisf out of breath,
At ony time he clatters a man to death,
Wha is oblig'd sometimes t' attend the sot,
To fave the captiv'd buttons of his coat,
Thou dinsome jackdaw! ken 'tis a difeafe
This palfy in thy tongue that ne'er can please:
Of a' mankind, thou art the maist miftane,
To think this way the name of fage to gain.

Now, lest I should be thought too much like thee,
I 'll give my readers leave to breathe a wee;
If they allow my picture's like the life,
Mae shall be drawn; originals are rife.

AN ADDRESS OF THANKS

FROM THE SOCIETY OF RAKES

To the pious Author of an Essay upon improving and
adding to the Strength of Great Britain and Ireland by
Fornication.

We Noblemen, Barons, and Burgeſſes of the foreſaid Claſs, to the
Rev. Dr. PHILOSARK, greeting:

THANKS and renown be ever thine,
O daring, ſenſible divine!

Who in a few learn'd pages,
Like great Columbus, now diſcovers
A pleaſing world to a' young lovers,
Unken'd to by-paſt ages.

Down, down with the repenting-ſtools,
That gart the younkers look like fools
Before the congregation,
Since thou, learn'd youth of riſing fame,
Prov'ſt that there 's neither ſin nor ſhame
In ſimple fornication.

Now

Now lads, laugh a', and tak your wills,
And scowp around like tups and bulls,
Have at the bonny lasses :
For conscience has nae mair to fay,
Our clergyman has clear'd the way,
And proven our fathers' asses.

Our dotard dads, snool'd wi' their wives
To girn and scart our wretched lives,
'Till death bound to a fixt ane ;
But now as free as cocks and sparrows,
We lawfully may shift our marrows,
And wheel round to the next ane.

Thus any mettled man may have,
Between his cradle and his grave,
By lawful fornication,
Bairns mony mae, with far less din,
Thus free, and be mair useful in
His day and generation.

Thus we may patriotism shaw,
And serve our country ane and a',
By fruitful propagation :
Thus will we bravely man our fleet,
Thus make our regiments a' complete,
And clear frae debts the nation.

Hence shall we never mair hear tell
Of lassies leading apes in hell,
Like them wha aften harl'd
Ane uselefs life up to fourscore,
Leal maids, and scarcely kent wherefore
They were sent to the warld.

The mimmeft now, without a blush,
May speer if any billy sprush
Has fancy for her beauty :
For since the awband 's tane away,
The bonny las has nought to say
Against a moral duty.

Adultery is the warft of crimes,
And calls for vengeance on these times,
As practis'd in this nation ;
But that vile fin can be no more,
When marriage is turn'd out of door
By franker fornication.

Peace be to you in dochters rife,
Since nane needs now to be a wife,
Their tochers winna fash ye ;
That universal ane of Cramond,
That gaes along wi' a good gammon,
Will fet aff ilka lassie.

Yet

Yet some by your new light will lose,
For those wha kirk affairs engross,
 Their session-books may burn all;
Since fornication's pipe 's put out,
What will they have to crack about,
 Or jot into their journal?

Even fell K. T. that gart us ban,
And eke that setting-dog his man,
 May turn Italian fingers,
Or use a tough St. Johnston ribbon,
For now the gain they were so glib on,
 Is slipt out thro' their fingers.

Nae mair at early hours and late
Shall they round bawdy-houses wait,
 Like cats for stragling mice;
Departed is that fund of fending,
When fornicators for offending
 They gart pay ony price.

Rejoice ye lads of little rent,
Wha loo'd the game, but did lament
 Your purses being skranky;
The dearth of forny 's now away,
Since lawfu', ye have nought to pay,
 But welcome and we thank ye.

Poor fornicators now grown auld,
Whase blood begins to creep but cauld,
 Will grumble with reflection,
To think what fashery they gaed through,
Dear Doctor, wanting ane like you
 To give them right direction.

What say ye for yourselves, ye priests,
For naming kind whoremasters beasts,
 When using of their freedom?
We hope ye 'll cease to take offence
At worthy wives like Lucky Spence,
 Or useful mother Needham.

Look up ye matrons, if ye can,
And bless the reverend pious man,
 Who proves that your procuring
Is now sae far frae being a crime,
That devotees, when past their prime,
 May lend a hand to whoring.

The fair ane frightened for her fame,
Shall for her kindness bear nae blame,
 Or with kirk-censure grapple;
Whilk gart some aft their leeful lane,
Bring to the warld the luckless wean,
 And sneg its infant thrapple:

For

For which by rude, unhallow'd fallows,
They were furrounded to the gallows,
 Making sad ruefu' murgeons ;
" 'Till their warm pulse forgot to play,
" They sang, they swang, and died away,"
 Syne were gi'en to the surgeons.

O leader ! see that ye be sure
That 'tis nae sin to play the whore ;
 For some in haly station
The contrair threep, and fair abuse ye ;
But we 'll aft drink your health and reese ye,
 For reefing fornication.

We might foresee the canker'd clergy
Wad with vile heterodoxy charge ye,
 And cast you out frae mang them ;
But that has been the common fate
Of a' reformers wha debate,
 Or struggle to o'ergang them.

But letna their ill word disturb ye ;
'Tis but a blast, they canna curb ye,
 Or cramp your new devotions :

A Briton

A Briton free thinks as he likes,
And as his fancy takes the fykes,
May preach or print his notions.

Be fatisfy'd, your doctrine new
Will favour find with not a few,
It being fae inviting ;
And tho' they kick ye frae their kirk,
For that sma' skaith ye need not irk,
We 'll make you a bra' meeting.

O had we fifty vacant kirks,
By pith, or flight, or ony quirks,
And we erected patrons,
Then should you see the Patron Act
Demolish a' the narrow pack,
And fessions rul'd by matrons.

The fattest stipend should be thine,
Thou pious and maist pure divine,
Thy right is back'd wi' reason ;
For wha can doubt your care of fauls,
Wha loudly for mair bodies calls,
In this degenerate season ?

But

But nine and forty pulpits still
Would then remain for you to fill
 With men of mighty gifts ;
Then, students, there were hopes for you
Wha 're of the learn'd freethinking crew,
 And now are at your shifts.

Your essay shaws your eloquence,
Your courtly style and flow of sense ;
 And tho' some say ye blunder,
Ye do them sae with scripture pelt,
They will be forc'd to thumb your belt
 At last, and a' knock under.

Your scheme must take ; for let me tell ye,
'Tis a good trade that fills the belly,
 The proverb proves it plainly :
And to say goodness is not good,
Wad shaw a mind extremely rude,
 To argue so prophanely.

Thou well deservest high promotion,
Wha 'st wrote with sic a lively motion
 Upon multiplication :
To enrich a kingdom 's better far
Than that curst business of war,
 That ushers desolation.

Doctor

Doctor farewel : O never stint,
For love's sweet sake, to preach and print,
 Tho' some with Bedlam shore ye ;
Do not sma' punishment regard,
Since virtue has its ain reward,
 In persecution, glory.



EPIGRAMMATICAL.



1721.

CUPID THROWN INTO THE SOUTH SEA.

MYRTILLA, as like Venus' fell,
As e'er an egg was like anither,
Ance Cupid met upon the Mall,
And took her for his bonny mither.

He wing'd his way up to her breast :
She started ; he cry'd, " Mam, 'tis me."
The beauty, in o'er rash a jest,
Flang the arch gytling in South Sea.

Frae thence he raise wi' gilded wings,
His bow and shafts to gowd were chang'd ;
" Deel 's i' the sea," quoth he, " it dings :"
Syne back to Mall and Park he rang'd.

Breathing

Breathing mischief, the god look'd gurly,
With transfers a' his darts were feather'd ;
He made a horrid hurly burly,
Where beaus and belles were thickest gather'd.

He tentily Myrtilia fought,
And in the thrang Change-Alley got her :
He drew his bow, and quick, as thought,
With a braw new subscription shot her.

1721.

ON A GOLD TEA-POT.

AFTER the gaining Edinburgh's prize,
The day before, with running thrice,
Me Milncraig's rock most fairly won,
When thrice again the course he run :
Now for diversion 'tis my share
To run three heats and please the fair.

1721.

ON A PUNCH-BOWL.

CHARGE me with Nantz and limpid spring,
Let four and sweet be mixt ;
Bend round a health, syne to the king,
To Edinburgh's captains next,
Wha form'd me in fae blyth a shape,
And gave me lasting honours,
Take up my ladle, fill, and lape,
And say, Fair fa' the donors.

SPOKEN TO THREE YOUNG LADIES.

ME, anes three beauties did furround,
And ilka beauty gave a wound,
Whilst they with smiling eye,
Said, " Allan, which think ye maist fair ?
" Gi'e judgment frankly ; never spare."—
" Hard is the task," said I.
But added, seeing them fae free,
" Ladies, ye maun say mair to me,
" And my demand right fair is ;
" First, like the gay celestial three,
" Shaw a' your charms, and then ha'e wi' ye,
" Faith, I shall be your Paris."

1721.

THE ROSE-TREE.

WITH awe and pleasure we behold thy sweets ;
Thy lovely roses have their pointed guards ;
Yet, tho' the gath'rer opposition meets,
The fragrant purchase all his pain rewards.

But hedg'd about and watch'd with wary eyes,
O plant superior, beautiful, and fair !
We view thee like yon stars which gem the skies,
But equally to gain we must despair.

Ah ! wert thou growing on some secret plain,
And found by me, how ravish'd would I meet
All thy transporting charms to ease my pain,
And feast my raptur'd soul on all that 's sweet.

Thus sung poor Symon.—Symon was in love,
His too aspiring passion made him smart ;
The rose-tree was a mistress far above
The shepherd's hope, which broke his tender
heart.

1721.

SPOKEN TO TWO YOUNG LADIES.

TO THE FIRST.

UPON your cheek fits blooming youth.

TO THE OTHER.

Heaven sparkles in your eye.

TO BOTH.

There 's something sweet about each mouth ;
Dear ladies, let me try.

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT OF AN ORANGE

FROM MISS G. LOCKHART, NOW THE COUNTESS OF ABOYNE.

Now, Priam's son, thou may'st be mute,
For I can blythly boast with thee ;
Thou to the fairest gave the fruit,
The fairest gave the fruit to me.

1728.

TO MR. POPE.

THREE times I 've read your Iliad o'er :
The first time pleas'd me well ;
New beauties unobserv'd before,
Next pleas'd me better still.

Again I try'd to find a flaw,
Examin'd ilka line ;
The third time pleas'd me best of a',
The labour seem'd divine.

Henceforward I 'll not tempt my fate,
On dazzling rays to stare,
Lest I should tine dear self-conceit,
And read and write nae mair.

WROTE ON LADY SOMERVILLE'S BOOK OF SCOTS SANGS.

GAE, canty book, and win a name ;
Nae lyrics e'er shall ding thee :
Hope large esteem, and lasting fame,
If Somervilla sing thee.
If she thy sinless faults forgive,
Which her sweet voice can cover,
Thou shalt, in spite of critics, live
Still grateful to each lover.

AN EPIGRAM.

MINERVA wand'ring in a myrtle grove,
Accosted thus the smiling queen of love :
Revenge yourself, you 've cause to be afraid,
Your boasted pow'r yields to a British maid :
She seems a goddess, all her graces shine ;
Love leads her beauty, which eclipses thine.
Each youth, I know, (says Venus,) thinks she 's me ;
Immediately she speaks, they think she 's thee :
Good Pallas, thus you 're foil'd as well as I.
Ha ! ha ! (cries Cupid,) that 's my Mally Sleigh.

1728.

ON THE MARQUIS OF ANNANDALE'S

CONVEYING ME A PRESENT OF GUINEAS IN MY SNUFF-BOX,
AFTER HE HAD TAKEN ALL THE SNUFF.

THE Chief requir'd my snifhing-mill,
And well it was bestow'd ;
The Patrón, by the rarest skill,
Turn'd all the snuff to gowd.

Gowd stamp't with royal Anna's face,
Piece after piece came forth :
The pictures smil'd, gi'en with such grace,
By ane of so much worth.

Sure thus the patronizing Roman
Made Horace spread the wing ;
Thus Dorset, by kind deeds uncommon,
Rais'd Prior up to sing.

That there are patrons yet for me,
Here 's a convincing proof ;
Since Annandale gives gowd as free
As I can part with snuff.

TO MRS. M. M—— ON HER PAINTING.

To paint his Venus, auld Apelles
Wal'd a' the bonny maids of Greece :
Thou needs nae mair but paint thyself, lafs,
To ding the painter and his piece.

ON MR. DRUMMOND'S BEING APPOINTED

A COMMISSIONER OF THE CUSTOMS.

THE good are glad when merit meets reward,
And thus they share the pleasure of another ;
While little minds, who only self regard,
Will sicken at the success of a brother.
Hence I am pleas'd to find myself right clafs'd,
Even by this mark, that 's worthy of observing ;
It gives me joy, the patent lately pass'd
In favour of dear Drummond, most deserving.

ON THE DUKE OF HAMILTON'S SHOOTING AN ARROW

THROUGH THE NECK OF AN EEL.

As from a bow a fatal flane,
Train'd by Apollo from the main,
In water pierc'd an eel ;
Sae mae the patriot's power and art
Sic fate to souple rogues impart,
That drumble at the commonweal :
Tho' they as ony eels are flid,
And thro' what 's vile can scud,
A bolt may reach them, tho' deep hid,
They sculk beneath their mud.

TO CALISTA.

ANES wisdom, majesty, and beauty,
Contended to allure the swain,
Wha fain wad pay to ilk his duty,
But only ane the prize could gain.

Were Jove again to redd debate,
Between his spouse and daughters twa,
And were it dear Calista's fate
To bid among them for the ba' ;

When given to her, the shepherd might,
Then with the fingle apple serve a' ;
Since she 's possesst of a' that 's bright,
In Juno, Venus, and Minerva.

A CHARACTER.

OF judgment just, and fancy clear,
Industrious, yet not avaricious;
No slave to groundless hope and fear;
Cheerful, yet hating to be vicious.

From envy free; tho' prais'd, not vain;
Ne'er acting without honour's warrant;
Still equal, generous, and humane,
As husband, master, friend, and parent.

So modest, as scarce to be known
By glaring, proud, conceited asses,
Whose little spirits often frown
On such as their less worth surpasses.

Ye 'll own he 's a deserving man,
That in these outlines stands before ye;
And trowth the picture I have drawn
Is very like my friend — *.

* The character, though true, has something in it so great, that my too modest friend will not allow me to set his name to it.

1726.

VERSES

ON THE LAST LEAF OF THE BANNATYNE MANUSCRIPT

IN THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY.

IN seventeen hundred twenty-four,
Did Allan Ramsay keen-
ly gather from this book that store,
Which fills his Evergreen.

Thrice fifty and sax towmonds neat,
Frae when it was collected ;
Let worthy poets hope good fate,
'Thro' time they 'll be respected.

Fashion of words and wit may change,
And rob in part their fame,
And make them to dull fops look strange,
But sense is still the fame ;

And will bleez bright to that clear mind,
That loves the ancient strains,
Like good Carmichael, patron kind,
To whom this book pertains.

FINIS quod ALLAN RAMSAY.

SPOKEN TO MRS. N——.

A POEM wrote without a thought,
By notes may to a song be brought,
Tho' wit be scarce, low the design,
And numbers lame in ev'ry line ;
But when fair Christy this shall sing
In concert with the trembling string,
O ! then the poet 's often prais'd,
For charms so sweet a voice hath rais'd.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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