

# HIGHLAND MARY.

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

"Who that has melted o'er his lay  
To Mary's soul, in heaven above,  
But pictured sees, in fancy strong,  
The landscape and the livelong day  
That smiled upon their mutual love?  
Who that has felt forgets the song?"

CAMPBELL.

PETRARCH sang of his Laura, Tasso celebrated the praises of his Leonora, and many others of the most brilliant planets of the poetical hemisphere have each had "some bright particular star," whom they delighted to honour in their verse. Not so Robert Burns; the heroines of his songs are in themselves a legion. Charinda, Chloris, Jessie, Katie, Jean, Mary, Peggy, Molly, Nancy, and twenty others, were by turns the subjects of his muse. It might afford matter of curious speculation to enquire in which of these cases the genius of a lyric poet is best fostered, or his fame most extended; and it is one on which we may take some future occasion to enter.

Our present purpose, however, is to note how enthusiastically Burns addressed each of these fair ones, as if she were, and ever would be, the sole guiding star of his affections. A chance meeting on a summer evening, where not even a word was interchanged between the parties, gave rise to the impassioned stanzas which he immediately addressed to the "Lass o' Ballochmyle," and the origin of his exquisite lines commencing "Oh Mally's meek, Mally's sweet!" was a mere glimpse hastily caught of a bare-footed country girl trudging along the High Street of Dumfries.

But easily enlisted as the feelings of Burns were, and readily as he in most instances forgot these transient passions, such was not always their fate. His tender devotion to his "Jean," during many trying years of poverty and distress, and the ardent affection with which he ever cherished the memory of "Highland Mary," are proofs that his heart, though susceptible, was capable of the most enduring attachment. The history of the former, as Mrs. Burns, is interwoven with that of her husband, but some particulars of the simple life of the latter may not be unacceptable.

Mary Campbell was born, of humble parentage, at Campbellton in Argyleshire, and, while still young, entered into the service of Colonel Hugh Montgomerie, of Coilsfield House, who afterwards succeeded to the Earldom of Eglinton. Here she became acquainted with Burns, then residing on the farm of Mossiel in the neighbourhood; and an attachment sprang up between them of the most pure and ardent nature. He attempted to pourtray his feelings in the following stanzas, which form one of his earliest lyrical compositions.

## THE HIGHLAND LASSIE.

Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,  
Shall ever be my muse's care;  
Their titles a' are empty show;  
Gie me my highland lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,  
Aboon the plains sae rushy, O,  
I set me down wi' right good will,  
To sing my highland lassie, O.

Oh, were yon hills and vales mine,  
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!  
The world then the love should know  
I bear my highland lassie, O.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,  
And I maun cross the raging sea;  
But while my crimson currents flow,  
I'll love my highland lassie, O.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,  
I know her heart will never change,  
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,  
My faithful highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,  
For her I'll trace a distant shore,  
That Indian wealth may lustre throw  
Around my highland lassie, O.