

ON READING DR. CURRIE'S LIFE OF BURNS.

[FOR THE H. M. M.]

GENIUS from her exalted throne,
 Once cast an eye on earth ;
 And look'd on Europe's classic soil,
 For one of her own birth :
 Though mountain, hill and dale she tried,
 Yet few of her own sons' she spied.

Rivals for fame enough there were,
 Which throng'd her crowded gate ;
 In all the gaudy splendid show,
 That e'er on fortune wait :
 But the proud wreath by her entwin'd,
 Ne'er on the brow of dulness shin'd.

Genius beheld the sight and wept,
 As still towards earth she turns ;
 Prepar'd her lyre and let it fall,
 Before the feet of Burns :
 And cried still stooping from the skies,
 " Strike this and gain the Victor's prize.

" Go sound this lyre in nature's tones,
 " Through city and through plain ;
 " And 'mid life's humble vale 'till I,
 " Shall take it back again,
 " Ne'er let it strike one cruel strain,
 " To give a fellow creature pain."

Burns as he toil'd behind the plough,
 Beheld the vision bright ;
 And stooped to gaze upon the gem,
 That struck his wondering sight,
 Vowed as he raised it from the ground,
 Its notes in Scotia's praise should sound.

Full well he knew the high behest,
 And caught the enchanting strains ;
 And sung in Scotia's artless verse,
 The manners of her swains :
 He touched the chords with such a grace
 That held with magic power his race.

Nature soon saw her favourite son,
 Too feeble for the weight ;
 Of those rare talents she bestowed,
 And laid the blame on Fate :
 While Fate denied the charge, she drew
 A veil to hide his faults from view.

And Fame least any acts of his,
 Might leave a lasting strain ;
 Called on the unsparing stroke of death,
 Nor made the call in vain :
 And hid beneath the valley's sward
 The blighted but unrivalled bard.