

OLD STEPHEN, A DIRGE.

TO H. BURKHOLDER, B. A.

Let labor lay by till we sing of old Stephen,
A song he deserves and a spell at the muse,
The faults of his life may you never believe in,
Nor his who recounts them—but do as you choose.

Old Stephen believed it was wrong to be sober—
Alas! 'tis the creed of too many we know—
His heart was not hard like the clod in October,
He often got high to keep memory low.

I knew of his orchard, wherein, a mere urchin,
I often delayed with my satchel, until
The school-master taught me the weight of his birch, in
The school-house that stood by the tree on the hill.

That school, where I dreaded to go as to prison,
With tasks still unlearned when the bell did recall
Our steps to the class and the taws and the lesson,
Some picture maps hung on the pencil-marked wall.

'Though fame, like an eagle o'er lofty Ben Lomond,
(A thing quite unlikely) in future should rise,
I'll mind where I carved his young daughter's cognomen,
Beneath the blue light of her beautiful eyes.

His portrait resembled the picture of Pluto,
Which hung by the door of my grandfather's hall;
His head was an orange tinge, countenance ditto,
But good was the heart that beat under it all.