

should vent itself on me. In short, such an inconceivable variety daily occurs to my observation in real life, that would, were they moralized upon, convey more maxims of wisdom, and give a juster knowledge of mankind, than whole volumes of *Lives and Adventures*, that perhaps never had a being, except in the prolific brains of their fantastic authors."

'The writer of an excellent memoir of Wilson in Constable's *Miscellany* justly observes, "that this, it must be acknowledged, is a somewhat prolix and overstrained summing up of his observations: but it proves Wilson to have been, at the early age of twenty three, a man of great penetration, and strong native sense; and shews that his mental culture had been much greater than might have been expected from his limited opportunities." At a subsequent period, he retraced his steps, taking with him copies of his poems to distribute among subscribers, and endeavour to promote a more extensive circulation. Of this excursion also he has given an account in his journal, from which it appears that his success was far from encouraging. Among amusing incidents, sketches of character, occasional sound and intelligent remarks upon the manners and prospects of the common classes of society into which he found his way, there are not a few severe expressions indicative of deep disappointment, and some that merely bespeak the keener pangs of wounded pride founded on conscious merit.

Wilson, on the breaking out of the flames of the French Revolution, like many other ardent spirits, thought they were fires kindled by a light from heaven. He associated himself with the Friends of the People—most of whom soon proved themselves to be the Enemies of the Human Race. His biographer in Constable's *Miscellany*—unlike one or two others elsewhere—saw Wilson's conduct, in all things connected with "this passage in his life," in its true light. That gentleman does not calumniate the respectable townsmen of the misguided Poet—and a Poet he was—for bringing him to legal punishment for an unprincipled act (an attempt to extort money for the suppression of satire, or rather gross and false abuse of private character,) which he committed, at a time when his moral sense—in after time firm, clear, and pure—was weakened, disturbed, and darkened by dangerous dreams and delusions, which his own reason soon afterwards dispelled. "His conduct has given umbrage to those in bower, and he was marked as a dangerous character. In this condition, foiled in his efforts to acquire a poet's name; depressed by poverty; hated by those who had smarted beneath his lash; and suspected on account of his politics; it is not to be wondered at, that Wilson listened willingly to the flattering accounts regarding America, and speedily resolved to seek that abode of Utopian excellence." His determination was high-heated and heroic, for the means were so which enabled him to carry it into execution. "When he finally determined on emigration, he was not possessed of funds sufficient to pay his passage. In order to surmount that obstacle, he adopt-