

by a man of eminence; was the subject of a play, of an opera, of a pantomime; was sung by the united armies in America, acted by Punch, and afterwards danced by dogs in the street; but never more honored than by the present investigation!"

One effect, however, of this popularity was unfortunate: it gave rise to a *Continuation of Auld Robin Gray*, which was sung about the streets, and even found its way into magazines, greatly to the annoyance of the authoress. This was probably a chief motive with her in writing the second part, in which the tragic pathos of the original song is wholly dissolved, by Auld Robin being made a martyr to the poetical justice of romance, and yielding his place in his comfortable home to young Jamie by considerably dying soon after his marriage. She may have been influenced partly also by affection for her mother, who used to ask some gratification of her curiosity about the fate of the lovers: "Annie, I wish you would tell me how that unlucky business of Jeanie and Jamie ended." But it was an evil day, for our perfect sympathy with the tragedy, when she abandoned her original conception of the absolute blamelessness of the three main sufferers, and adopted the hint thrown out by the Laird of Dalzell, in an exclamation which he uttered on listening to the first part: "Oh! the villain! Oh! the auld rascal! I ken wha stealt the poor cow—it was Auld Robin Gray himsel'!"

In the same class we find the following remarks about

#### DRINKING SONGS.

But unhappily songs of this class do not limit themselves to the description of harmless, wholesome fun; there are, indeed, few good social songs which do not praise the zest imparted to friendly gatherings by means of a more material stimulant. This introduces us to the large collection of Scottish lyrics, which may be described in general as *Drinking Songs*. The most cursory acquaintance with Scottish poetry will convince anyone that these songs represent a very extensive literature, and a literature of a very remarkable character. I will not say that they surpass, in lyrical force, anything of the kind to be met with in any other literature: for sweeping assertions of that sort generally betray merely ignorance of any literature but one; while, without going beyond the modern languages, there are several German students' songs which would make such an assertion extremely questionable. But there is something distinctive in the drinking songs of the Scotch. They do not express the refined, but more artificial enjoyment of one who is politely sipping a beverage like wine, the delicate

flavor of which can be appreciated only by the educated connoisseur, nor the exulting gratification of one who is quaffing a beverage like beer, which is drunk in quantities as much to quench thirst as for the sake of its mildly stimulating effect: the Scots drinking song is purely and avowedly in praise of the general elevation in mental and bodily power excited by

"Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!"

The happy play of fancy and language in which this theme is variously wrought out is unexcelled by nothing in the whole compass of Scottish song; but the literary skill of these productions cannot, in the present enquiry, hide from us their effect on the habits of the people. Though some of these songs express simply the impulse which is given by a stimulant to the more rapid flow of social enjoyment, yet against others I do not hesitate—and no one who studies them dispassionately can hesitate—to bring the charge of seriously contributing to perpetuate what used to be a prevalent vice among all classes, what continues to be a prominent vice and the most hopeless obstacle to social reform among the working classes of Scotland. There is none of our best songs which deliberately represents any other gross vice in an attractive aspect; but in many of the drinking songs, all the charm of lyrical thought and expression is thrown around that sacrifice of intelligence to the demon of Unreason, which is truthfully represented only in language of pity or of scorn. It is true that the lyrical poet must catch an emotion while it is flowing at white heat, and run it then into the mould of song; and this may explain the extravagance with which many of the drinking songs are characterized. But the license which this principle of lyrical poetry allows is certainly exceeded in the drunken merriment to which some, though few, of these songs give utterance, over the personal degradation resulting from the vice they encourage:—

"O gude ale comes, and gude ale goes;  
Gude ale gars me sell my hose,  
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon;  
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.

"I had sax owsen in a pleuch,  
And they drew teuch and well enueh:  
I drank em a' just ane by ane;  
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon."

The remainder of this old song, which took some touches from the hand of Burns, describes a lower stage of degradation, which does not admit of being cited. An equal transgression of the limits of all legitimate license may be charged against