

make its appearance, and alarms the Kirk-session so much that they hold several meetings, to look over their spiritual artillery. Unluckily for him, his wanderings lead him on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to his printed poem, *The Lament*. He is compelled to perform penance in church—inveigle against the clergyman for rebuking him—writes his *Epistle to Rankine* and his song, *The Ranting Dog the Daddie o't*.

1785. (26.)

Espouses the cause of Gavin Hamilton against the Auld Light Fanatics; and produces, in succession, *The Kirk's Alarm*, *The Ordination*, *The Holy Fair*, etc.—His *Address to the Deil*, and *Death and Doctor Hornbook*.

April 1-21.—Writes his *Epistles to Lapraik*, and, in the course of the year, *Halloween*, *The Jolly Beggars*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and various songs.

1786. (27.)

March 20.—Encloses Mr. Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, his *Scotch Drink*, with a wish that the — may follow, with a blessing, for his edification.

April 3.—Writes to Mr. Aiken his proposals for publishing by subscription, he is just going to send to press, and signs his name, for the last time—*Burness*.

April 20.—Encloses Mr. John Kennedy his *Mountain Daisy* (entitled in the MS. *The Gowan*), as being the very latest of his productions, and composed while holding the plough. His connection with his bonny Jean—She presents him with twins—Anger of her father—The distress of the Poet—Performs penance a second time in the kirk for his incontinency—Is called upon to find security for the maintenance of his children—Is unable to raise the money, and the alternative is expatriation, or a jail—Prefers the former.

August 1.—Publishes the first Edition of his *Poems*—Realises above £20, and takes out his passage for Jamaica—Composes the last song he believes he shall ever measure in Caledonia, *The Gloomy Night is gathering fast*; when a letter from Dr. Blacklock fortunately arrives, which overthrows all his schemes, by opening new prospects to his poetic ambition. His poems everywhere received with rapture—Cultivates friendship with Professor Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blair, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Gregory, Mrs. Dunlop, etc.—Visits Katrine, the seat of Dugald Stewart, where he meets Lord Daer and Mrs. Stewart of Stair, whom he celebrates in his song, *Flow gently, sweet Afton*—Composes the *Lass of Ballochmyle*, and forwards the song to the heroine, Miss Alexander—is treated by her with coldness, which he resents with bitterness.

November 28.—Arrives in Edinburgh.

1787. (28.)

January 7.—Writes to Gavin Hamilton that he feels a miserable blank in his heart, from the want of his bonnie Jean. "I don't think," he says, "I shall ever meet with so delicious an armful again. She has her faults; but so have you and I; and so has everybody."

January 14.—Attends a Grand Masonic Lodge, etc.—Received with Acclamation as the Bard of Caledonia—Resides with his friend Richmond, in the house of Mrs. Carfrae, Lawnmarket, in a single room, at the rent of 3s. a week—Meets the Duchess of Gordon, and his conversation completely carries her off her feet.

April 4.—Publishes the second Edition of his *Poems*, of which 3,000 copies are subscribed for—Commences his second *Common Place Book*.

May 6.—Sets out on a Border Tour, in company with Robert Ainslie, Esq.—Presented by the