

His future comfort, and worldly independence seemed to depend on his own perseverance, in working out his own scheme of life. "The farm and the excise exhibit the poet's humble scheme of life,"—says his biographer "the money of the one, he thought, would support the toil of the other, and in the fortunate management of both, he looked for the rough abundance, if not the elegancies suitable to a poet's condition."

In connection with this point, there is a querulous tone of complaint pervading the memoir of Allan Cunningham, which does not seem to be justified by the facts which he himself narrates. He talks about his "ungrateful country," "sordid meanness," "coldness and neglect," "abuse of the sacred trust of patronage," and other such like platitudes. And he laments that such a genius was "driven to live by the sweat of his brow" or "degraded to the plow and the excise." Now, all that in the face of the simple narrative sounds very much like nonsense; and it is as false in sentiment, as it seems uncalled for by the circumstances of the case. There was no degradation involved in Burns going to his farm, in his being required to labour for a maintenance; no degradation even in poverty, and Burns would not have been slow to tell his biographer that, and to repudiate indignantly such a sentiment.

"Is there for honest poverty,
That hangs his head and a' that,
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that."

If a man be but true to himself, it is beyond the power of outward circumstances to degrade him.—And besides, Burns was a very proud man; the patronising help which might have been gladly received