

V. EDINBURGH 1786-1788 (Aetat. 28-30).

The visit of the poet to Edinburgh soon after the publication of his first volume was, in most respects, successful. He was made much of. He was introduced into the best literary society, and produced a most favorable impression upon all whom he met. His deportment was gentle and dignified. His voice was pleasant, his conversation animated and humorous, and his wonderful eyes were never forgotten.

Not merely social advantages, but commercial also resulted from this visit. A new edition of his poems brought him £500, part of which he gave to his brother Gilbert who was struggling with his farm, and out of which he defrayed the expenses of a tour in the Highlands. About the same time he became a contributor to Johnson's Museum, for which he wrote about 180 songs, and to Thomson's Melodies of Scotland, which had from him about 100, some new, some recast.

To this period belongs the episode of Clarinda, the wife of a Mr. McLehose, who had gone to the West Indies. An attachment sprang up between the lady and the poet, leading to a high-flown correspondence, which is preserved, but adds nothing to Burns's literary reputation. Of whatever quality or depth this attachment may have been, it was not of long duration, for in 1788 Burns again met Jean Armour and the old love revived, and at the age of 29 he married her, now in public and with the consent of her people. Soon afterwards he was appointed to a post in the Excise, receiving £50 a year, afterwards raised to £70. This post he held during the last seven years of his life. We can hardly regard such an appointment with satisfaction. We remember Carlyle's bitter remark about providence having sent to the world one of its most brilliant children

and they sent him to gauge ale-barrels! Alas!

VI. ELLISLAND. 1788-1791 (Aetat. 30-33).

Soon after his marriage Burns removed to Ellisland, where he united farming and the discharge of his duties as Excise officer. These duties, such as they were, he fulfilled in a creditable manner, but it is apparent that he was overworked and unfitted for his own proper business. Yet some poems produced during this period are equal to anything he ever did. For example, we have that most sweet and perfect song 'Of a' the airts the win' can blaw,' written during his honeymoon. The second part of this song, sometimes printed in the works of Burns, was added by John Hamilton, and met with remarkable success in spite of its audacity. In the same year were written "I ha'e a wife o' my ain," "Auld Lang Syne," much improved from an older song, "Go, fetch to me a pint of wine."

In the following two years he wrote not only "Kirk's Alarm" and "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," but three pieces each of which must stand at the head of the class of compositions to which it belongs—"John Anderson, my jo" (1789), and "Tam o' Shanter" and the "Elegy on Captain Henderson" (1790).

VII. DUMFRIES. 1791-1796 (Aetat. 33-37).

For the last five years Burns lived at Dumfries, for the first time out of his native county of Ayr, although not far from its borders. It was neither town nor country, that is to say, it had all the disadvantages of each, and was the very worst place for Burns to live in. Yet even here the divine singer was not mute, and to this period belong the "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," the "Lament of James, Earl of Glencairn," "Ae fond kiss," a lyric extolled by men so different as Byron, Scott, Carlyle and