

for all future biographies. Sir Alexander Boswall, son of the latter, succeeded him and like his predecessors gave his attention chiefly to literary pursuits. He kept a printing press at Auchinleck, by means of which, says Paterson, the literary world was favored with exact transcripts of some of the rare books preserved in the library. He latterly sat in Parliament for a small English burgh and obtained for himself a baronetcy by his energy and activity in suppressing Radical outbreaks among the people. He is better known as a poet and humorist, and in 1803 he published a small volume of lyrics entitled, "Songs, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect." These obtained considerable popularity, a few even finding their way into some editions of Burns. Many of his jokes and humorous stories, some in verse, are still current about the country-side. On one occasion, taking a stroll in his grounds he came upon some youthful trespassers amusing themselves climbing trees. One little urchin he caught up a tree, who—on being ordered—refused to come down, alleging he would "meddle him." Sir Alexander solemnly declared "upon his honor" that he would not touch him. "A snuff for your honor" replied the young parleyer, "say 'as sure as death,' and I'll come down." The baronet, amused by the precocity of the boy, took the required oath, and let the little fellow off, himself brimful of mirth that his young prisoner had got him to yield to his conditions of peace. His courtship of the muses latterly brought him to an untimely end. For publishing a satirical poem reflecting on the character of James Stuart, Esq., of Duncarn, he was drawn into a duel which ended fatally for him. This unhappy event happened in 1822, and is sadly interesting as the last of these fights for "honor"—once so common in Scotland. Sir Alexander was a youthful contemporary of Burns, and in a preserved but unpublished MS. of the bard appears a vignette of