

legible." Sir John Bruce, a brother-in-law of Lady Wardlaw, was already in his grave, so no questions could be asked. Whoever penned the extract, most probably meant nine-tenths, when he referred to "the tenth part." But to whomsoever its authorship be ascribed, the letter was not more genuine than the parchment it referred to.

The poem itself had long before issued from the press of James Watson, of Edinburgh, in the form of a twelve page folio tract; but later editions include additional stanzas, over and above those first produced by Lady Wardlaw in practical acknowledgment of her title to the authorship of the whole. To the versatile pen of this little-headed Scottish poetess, Dr. Robert Chambers has since ascribed the production of "Sir Patrick Spens," "Gil Morrice," "Young Waters," "Gilderoy," and others: the cream of Scottish ballads, hitherto regarded as genuine antiques, and printed by Percy as such, though not always without unacknowledged patchings, or variations and additions on the authority of his ancient folio MS.

Or let us take an example among the foremost critics of that day. The hero of the "Dunciad," Lewis Theobald, had his revenge on his satirist, by publishing a critical edition of Shakespeare's dramas which completely eclipsed that of Pope, and is still recognised as a valuable addition to Shakesperian textual criticism. But in 1728, he printed, as a genuine play of Shakespeare, recovered from an original manuscript: "The Double Falsehood," a worthless production, which was nevertheless introduced on the stage, and received with general admiration. The following passage, so foreign alike to the style and rhythm of Shakespeare, was specially singled out for general commendation:—

"Strike up, my masters;
But touch the strings with a religious softness;
Teach sound to languish through the night's dull ear,
Till melancholy start from her lazy couch,
And carelessness grow convert to attention."

The vanity of the real author was not proof against the seductive applause lavished on these choice lines. He confessed that they were his own, but at the same time persisted in accrediting Shakespeare with the rest. The title of "The Double Falsehood" most aptly preserves the memory of this characteristic incident in the history of the literature of a period, when vanity, and a craving for notoriety on any terms, gave birth to a singular brood of literary bastards.