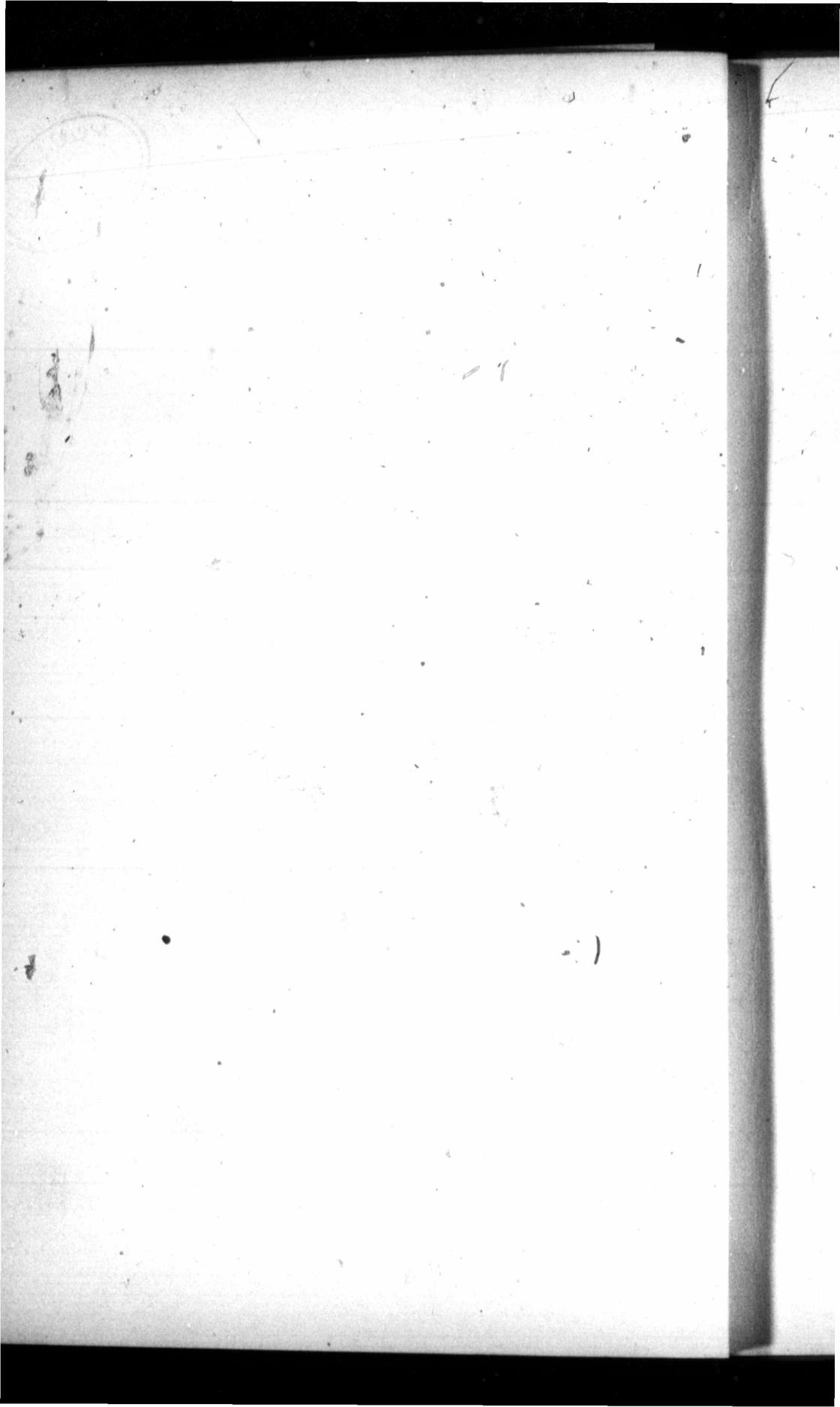


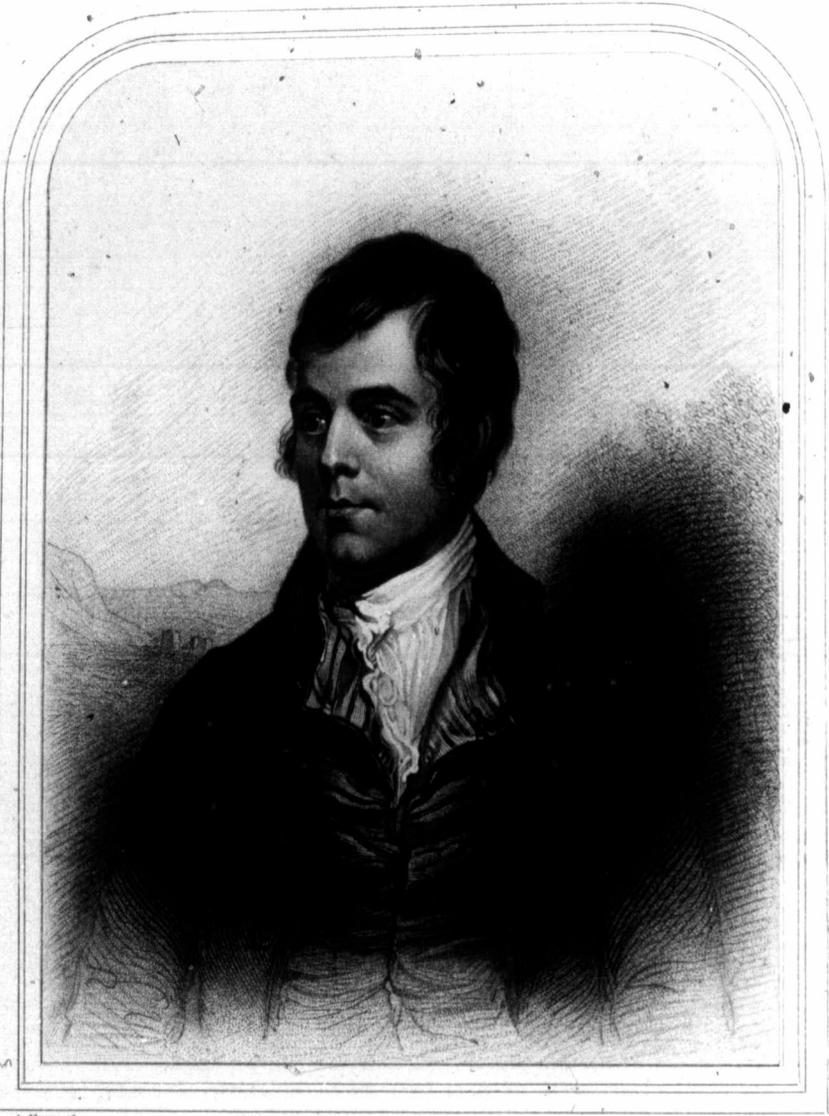
THE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.



- 4







A. Nasmyth.

H. T. Ryatt

ROBERT BURNS.

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THE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

WITH
A SERIES OF AUTHENTIC
PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS,
MARGINAL GLOSSARY, NUMEROUS NOTES, AND APPENDIXES:

ALSO
THE LIFE OF BURNS, BY J. G. LOCKHART;
AND ESSAYS ON THE GENIUS, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS OF BURNS,
BY THOMAS CARLYLE AND PROFESSOR WILSON.

EDITED BY
CHARLES ANNANDALE, M.A., LL.D.,
EDITOR OF THE "IMPERIAL DICTIONARY," ETC.

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THE
WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS.

ON THE GENIUS OF THE POET.

BY THOMAS CARLYLE.¹

SUMMARY.

OUR grand maxim of supply and demand. Living misery and posthumous glory. The character of Burns a theme that cannot easily become exhausted. His Biographers. Perfection in Biography. Burns one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century: An age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen. His hard and most disadvantageous conditions. Not merely as a Poet, but as a Man, that he chiefly interests and affects us. His life a deeper tragedy than any brawling Napoleon's. His heart, erring and at length broken, full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things. The Peasant Poet bears himself among the low, with whom his lot is cast, like a King in exile. His Writings but a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him, yet of a quality enduring as the English tongue. He wrote, not from hearsay, but from sight and actual experience. This, easy as it looks, the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with. Byron, heartily as he detested insincerity, far enough from faultless. No poet of Burns's susceptibility from first to last so totally free from affectation. Some of his Letters, however, by no means deserve this praise. His singular power of making all subjects, even the most homely, interesting. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place. Every genius an impossibility till he appears. Burns's rugged earnest truth, yet tenderness and sweet native grace. His clear graphic "descriptive touches" and piercing emphasis of thought. Professor Stewart's testimony to Burns's intellectual vigour. A deeper insight than any "doctrine of association." In the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling. Loving Indignation and good Hatred: "Scots wha hae," "Macpherson's Farewell;" Sunny buoyant floods of Humour. Imperfections of Burns's poetry: "Tam o' Shanter," not a true poem so much as a piece of sparkling rhetoric: The "Jolly Beggars," the most complete and perfect as a poetical composition. His Songs the most truly inspired and most deeply felt of all his poems. His influence on the hearts and literature of his country: Literary patriotism. Burns's acted Works even more interesting than his written ones; and these too, alas, but a fragment: His passionate youth never passed into clear and steadfast manhood. The only true happiness of a man: Often it is the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it: Burns and Byron. Burns's hard-worked, yet happy boyhood: His estimable parents. Early dissipations. In Necessity and Obedience a man should find his highest Freedom. Religious quarrels and scepticisms. Faithlessness: Exile and blackest desperation. Invited to Edinburgh: A Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of Literature. Sir Walter Scott's reminiscence of an interview with Burns. Burns's calm manly bearing amongst the Edinburgh aristocracy. His bitter feeling of his own indigence. By the great he is treated in the customary fashion; and each party goes his several way. What Burns was next to do, or to avoid: His Excise-and-Farm scheme not an unreasonable one: No failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. Good beginnings. Patrons of genius and picturesque tourists: Their moral rottenness, by which he became infected, gradually eat out the heart of his life. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but they are not his stars. Calumny is busy with him. The little great-folk of Dumfries: Burns's desolation. In his destitution and degradation

¹ Contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, in 1828, in the form of a review of Lockhart's *Life of Burns* published in that year. The second edition of the *Life* is contained in the first volume of this work.

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one act of self-devotedness still open to him: Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country. The crisis of his life: Death. Little effectual help could perhaps have been rendered to Burns: Patronage twice cursed: Many a poet has been poorer, none prouder. And yet much might have been done to have made his humble atmosphere more genial. Little Babylons and Babylonians: Let us go and do otherwise. The market-price of Wisdom. Not in the power of any mere external circumstances to ruin the mind of a man. The errors of Burns to be mourned over, rather than blamed. The great want of his life was the great want of his age, a true faith in Religion and a singleness and unselfishness of aim. Poetry, as Burns could and ought to have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion. For his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were absolutely advantageous. To divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets an ill-starred attempt. Byron, rich in worldly means and honours, no whit happier than Burns in his poverty and worldly degradation: They had a message from on High to deliver, which could leave them no rest while it remained unaccomplished. Death and the rest of the grave: A stern moral, twice told us in our own time. The world habitually unjust in its judgments of such men. With men of right feeling anywhere, there will be no need to plead for Burns: In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts.

In the modern arrangements of society it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, "ask for bread and receive a stone;" for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet [1828] have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the sixth narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!¹

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologize for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him, or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The

¹ [At least eight biographies of Burns appeared before that of Lockhart, viz.:—Heron's in 1797; Currie's in 1800; David Irving's in 1804; Chalmers' in 1804; Professor Walker's in 1811; Peterkin's in 1813; Hamilton Paul's in 1819; and Campbell the poet's, also in 1819.]

character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted, and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet, and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain that, to the vulgar eye, few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay, perhaps, painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbour of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a *Life of Shakspeare*! What dissertations should we not have had,—not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player, and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honourable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard,

or to estimate what the eighteenth century thought of him in the world. It is still a fair problem repeated attempts at approximations.

His former Biographer, no doubt, tried to assist us. Dr. Currie, principal of these mistaken ones, is their own and their author, and such men to thin Dr. Currie loved than he avowed himself; yet he even a certain patronizing polite public misanthrope scholar and gentleman to a rustic. In admit that his feeble weakness of faith kindest of all could not have seen fully what he saw deeply in the success in presenting upon his several successes, instead of character as a liar, not painting a picture and breadth of view down their dimness. Nay, it is not to learn by what could be so me

Mr. Lockhart avoided both the faults of Burns as the public voice heard and in delineating a method of seeking for sensations, sayings exhibit the world among his feelings with all its details, think, into the any prior biography the very popular

or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult we say, but still a fair problem for literary historians, and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly, more perhaps than he avowed to his readers or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air, as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honour to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind; and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait, but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical cyphers. Nay, it is not so much as that; for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be; and in delineating him he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an

article for *Constable's Miscellany*, it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant, and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed on all hands to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, "the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment." But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents,—though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession,—as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not,

is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy, and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days" have long since elapsed, and the very continuance of this clamour proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model, or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time, and he works accordingly with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is his state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed or remain for ever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains, but no dwarf will hew them down with

a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Fergusson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labour, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time

and means were through life he the deepest.

has since with whether Napoleon Sir Hudson Lo "amid the melf reflecting mind fear" as did th and perhaps gr in a hopeless st which coiled cl only death ope are a class of r the world cou hard intellect, t high but self inspire us in best it may ex like that of a a certain sadn a man in whos Wisdom, some is the most pr on a generati development selves; his li mourn his de loved and tau

Such a gift stowed on us like indifference like a thing c and torn asu recognized it given the pe venerable, bu life was not ignorance w faults of othe that spirit, v but have w glorious fact blossom; an out ever havi a soul; so fi living and li out in symp in her bleak a meaning! under his pl that "wee,

and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, "amid the melancholy main," presented to the reflecting mind such a "spectacle of pity and fear" as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queen-like indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny,—for so in our ignorance we must speak,—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The "Daisy" falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee, cowering, timorous beastie," cast

forth, after all its provident pains, to "thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld." The "hoar visage" of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for "it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*" A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the "insolence of condescension" cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from

friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was "quick to learn;" a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; "a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody." And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The

grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; "in homely rustic jingle;" but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough; but the practical appliance is not easy; is in-

deed the fundame have to strive wi the hundred ev too dull to discr a heart too dull and to hate the tions, are alike f or as more com these deficiencies a wish to be orig and we have Affe as Cant, its elder often does the o poetry, as in life not always free o on a certain sort is most common after excellence with a mere sh much to unfold, perfectly. Byron man: yet if we view, we shall fi Generally speak not true. He r fountain, but waters, stimula soon ending in his Harolds an men; we mean ceivable men? not the charact or less shines t a thing put on possible mode o to look much g these stormful superhuman co with so much and other sulp brawling of a which is to las of a man in t last threescore there is a tain we should cal every one of th Perhaps *Don* of it, is the on work, he ever showed himse and seemed :

deed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humour, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected; in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for

moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavour to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilted emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember

that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His Letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is for ever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-coloured Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-coloured Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, "a sermon on the duty of staying at home." Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision

deeper than that of other men,—they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so,—they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favour, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavours; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance "the elder dramatists," and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred

in a certain rank, tial footing with above all things, seeing the world, him little difficult see it with. W task might be har man "travels fr finds it all barre is born in the against his will, lives. The myst heart, the true li ness of man's d only in capital c in every hut and abode. Nay, do virtues and all once of a Borgis in stronger of f ness of every in tised honest se same world may bolton, if we lo came to light i itself.

But sometim laid on the poo hinted that he : turies ago; im: date, vanished longer attainab lations have, no of literature; b of any plant Burns, unconso onward, silentl every genius a Why do we ca saw where his fabric he coul material but ti is not the dark *eye*. A Scottis and rudest of poet in it, and life, and there sand battlefie *Wounded Ho* memorial; a us from its.d there. Our

in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren." But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakspeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if we saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battlefields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and re-

passed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee*; but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awk-

ward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of every sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his "Winter Night" (the italics are ours):

When biting Boreas, fell and doure, stern
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r, stare
And Phoebus gies a short-liv'd glow'r sky
Far south the lift,
Dim dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns wi' snawy wreaths upchok'd
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the minting outlet bock'd
Down headlong hurl.

Are there not "descriptive touches" here? The describer saw this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. "Poor labour locked in sweet sleep;" the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye!—Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig*:

When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal¹ draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and spotting thowes,²
In many a torrent down his snaw-broo rows;³
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,⁴
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups⁵ up to the pouring skies.

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the "gumlie

¹ Fabulous Hydaspes!

² Thaws.

³ Melted snow rolls.

⁴ Flood.

⁵ Discoloured waves.

jaups" and the "pouring skies" are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin.—In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink*; but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,
And Time is setting wi' me, O;
Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we see our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections. Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigour and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of "a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward "*red-wat-shod*," in this one word, a

full vision of horror frightfully accurate.

In fact, one of the mind of Burns is intellectual perceptible in his judgements and volitions. Perhaps with some surprise Burns's mind was equally vigorous poetry was the enthusiastic and ingenious exclusive composition. From have pronounced whatever walk of exert his abilities not, is at all times poetical endowments cases as that of consists in a weak-ness a certain vague force is no separate fire superadded to the but rather the result and completion. exist in the Poemore or less desoul: the imagination of Hell of Dante, in degree, which comes. How does the Poet but by being Shakespeare, it planning and execution shown an Und more, which might indited a *Novel* force of understanding have less mean among the humsophy; never resort for short inter ideas. Nevertheless no proof sufficient we discern the though untutostand how, in insight into might else about thinkers of his But, unless

full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigour of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: "All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakspeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift

of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient, nay perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and "the highest," it has been said, "cannot be expressed in words." We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, "wonders," in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the "doctrine of association." We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

"We know nothing," thus writes he, "or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."¹

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind

¹ Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 1st January, 1789. [See note to Lockhart's *Life*, vol. i. p. 90.]

often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more prevailing than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "Love furthers knowledge:" but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: "the hoary hawthorn," the "troop of gray plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the "ourie cattle," and "silly sheep," and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

I thought me on the ourie cattle, shivering
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle, storm
O' wintry war, [scramble
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle, sinking deep,
Beneath a scaur. cliff
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing, hopping
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing, shivering
And close thy ee?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its "ragged roof and chinky wall," has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

But fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak a thought and men!
Ye aiblins might,—I dinna ken,— perhaps, don't
Still hae a stake; [know
I'm wae to think upo' yon den, sorrowful
Even for your sake!

"He is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop; "and is cursed and damned already."—"I am sorry for it," quoth my Uncle Toby!—a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that "Indignation makes verses"? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in principle, we rather believe that good men despise sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a "good" hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his "Dweller in yon Dungeon dark;" a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful "darkness visible;" and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
Hangman of Creation, mark!
Who in widow's weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

Why should we wi' Wallace bled; the king to the mead; the dithyrambic was coo-riding in the mid-wildest Galloway! Mr. Syme, who, of forebore to speak, a man composing "I unsafe to trifle with hymn was—singing through the soul of ear, it should be of whirlwind. So long the heart of Scotland in fierce thrills unwe believe, that we:

Another wild story our ear and mind "Macpherson's Fingert something in the operates. For was shaggy Northland sturt and strife, an not he too one of the earth, in the misty glens, for you one? Nay, was given him? A fine poetry itself, much heart: for he came before his execution poor melody his above oblivion, perhaps despair, which, led him to the abyss and in Pelops' line against man's Fortune though obscure, sank not, even in which has survived could have given that we never list barbarous, half-p

Sae rantingly
Sae dauntin
He play'd a s
Below the f

Under a lighte

¹ [Syme's story is Thomson, 1st Sept. Essay.]

properly cohere; the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-coloured spectrum painted on ale-vapours, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more "Shakspearean" qualities, as these of "Tam o' Shanter" have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his "poems" is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of the "Jolly Beggars."¹ The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement, yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, that *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream and the very Ragcastle of "Poosie-Nansie." Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tattered demials are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird* and our *Balladmonger* are singing

¹ [The "Jolly Beggars" first appeared in "Poems ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Bard. Glasgow: Stewart, 1801," the year following the publication of Currie's edition.]

and soldiering; their "brats and callets" are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humour, warm life, and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigour, equals this *Cantata*; nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns, which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced; for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality;" we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavouring to sing; though, for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul*; not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in

some vaporous debasement of the Nervous System, and rhymes gals and rhymes originated.

With the Songs these things. In many, heartfelt so his poetry, his So point of view: in They do not *affect* actually and in ti have received thei selves together, in as Venus rose from story, the feeling gested; not *said* o pleteness and col gushes, in glowing in *warblings* not c whole mind. We sence of a song; a little careless cate song, which Shal sprinkled over hi in nearly the sam do. Such grace s ment, too, presupp ing force and tru meaning. The S perfect in the form With what tender vehemence and er wail in his sorro joy; he burns wi with the loudest sweet and soft, " lovers meet, and If we farther tal variety of his st flowing revel in Maut," to the sti for "Mary in H greeting of "Au archness of "Du fury of "Scots w has found a tone man's heart—it rank him as the for we know not being second to

It is on his Sor chief influence a

some vaporous debateable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades his poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said* or spouted in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slickest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, "sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear." If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in "Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut," to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for "Mary in Heaven;" from the glad kind greeting of "Auld Langsyne," or the comic archness of "Duncan Gray," to the fire-eyed fury of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be

found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers most popular in Burns's time were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment, was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo*; the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen as for men, or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalisations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, as far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we

had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our "fervid genius," there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he ought to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally lived, as metaphysically investigated. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this unaccountable enough. We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable

Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briars, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briars nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the "Doctrine of Rent" to the "Natural History of Religion," are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humours and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: "a tide of Scottish prejudice," as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, "had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest." It seemed to him, as if he could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him,—that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he laboured there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

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. . . A wish (I mind its power), remember
 A wish, that to my latest hour
 Will strongly heave my breast,—
 That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
 Some useful plan or book could make,
 Or sing a sang at least.

The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
 Among the bearded bear,
 I turned the weeder-clips aside, weeding-shears
 And spared the symbol dear.

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this, too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavours, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such dis-

tinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain "Rock of Independence;" which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colours: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honour, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labour, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favour. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no "pre-established harmony" existed between the clay

soil of Mossiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toil-worn; but otherwise not ungenial, and with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, openminded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature,—for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British Literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged

scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God*, are heard there from a "priest-like father;" if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a "little band of brethren." Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humour of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-coloured splendour and gloom; and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

. . . in glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep; and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be

forced and fated to them, and even leprous armada. we are, at all events, one receives in the determining for true manly A after we have been in the chase of have ascertained, barriers hem us in it is to hope for soul from the world; that a man self; and that for is no remedy but hood begins where truce with Necessity have surrendered part only do; but fully only when to Necessity; and over it, and felt Surely such less shape or other, mortal man, are of a devout motif of a devout father and pliant, the adamant of Fate us, when the he broken before Burns continued learning it, in have learned it been saved man bitter hour and It seems to import in Burns he became inv of his district; as the fighting hood, in their tables of learned much: Such liberal r in his mind set a whole world quite another to exorcise. tellect as his co at some period

forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurers than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he

could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by "passions raging like demons" from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; "hungry Ruin has him in the wind." He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the "gloomy night is gathering fast," in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh;¹ hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honour, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Liter-

¹ [Blacklock's letter, to Dr. Lawrie, among other things induced Burns to betake himself to Edinburgh, but he received no express invitation.]

ature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as "a mockery king," set there by favour, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength in him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

"It needs no effort of imagination," says he, "to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble,—nay, to tremble visibly,—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves."

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative:¹ a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter

¹ Life prefixed to Morison's edition of Burns, 1811.

Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:—

"As for Burns," writes Sir Walter, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptised in tears.

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of the 'Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, i.e. none of your modern agriculturists who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence without the slightest presumption. Among

the men who were to country, he expressed but without the least when he differed in I express it firmly, yet I do not remember distinctly enough to be again, except in the me, as I could not be caressed in Edinburgh emoluments have been for his relief were

"I remember, on Burns's acquaintance limited; and also the ties of Allan Ramsay them with too much was doubtless natural. "This is all I can only to add that manner. He was to dine with the laird tem, when I saw his superiors in a state free from either the embarrassment. I was his address to females always with a turn which engaged the heard the late Duke do not know anything of forty years since

The conduct of blaze of favour; manner in which mated its value the best proof of vigour and integrity, some too some glimmering fear of being unpardonable in dedication is to be ample situation moment perplexed not confuse his Nevertheless, winter did him somewhat clear scarcely of their but a sharper arrangements in with him. He arena in which their parts; and amidst of it; and that here he was part or lot in it

the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Fergusson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favour; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigour and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay, had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this

time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one and reject the other; but must halt for ever between two opinions, two objects, making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price;" and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question, too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for

Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gaugé*, and would have had him lie at the pool till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit, and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme! he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he "did not intend to borrow honour from any profession." We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well; with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the "patrons of genius," who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have

healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,¹ all manner of fashionable dangles after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighbourhood; and Burns had no

¹ There is one little sketch by certain "English gentlemen" of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: "On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox-skin on his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns." Now, we rather think it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the fox-skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this "enormous Highland broad-sword" depending from him? More especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, either in his own eyes, or those of others, by such poor mummeries. [There is nothing very incredible in the story, which is circumstantially told. Burns did sometimes indulge in eccentricities, and we have Mrs. Burns's evidence that he had a cap of the kind described, and two swords—one of them an *Andrea Ferrara*, though she did not remember him being so foolish as to put a sword on.]

retreat but to "which is but an a well at a distance real wind and w excitement, exas tempt of others, Burns was no lo mind, but fast los hollowness at the science did not doing.

Amid the vapo bootless remorse, Fate, his true lo; Poverty, nay wit was too often alt And yet he sail such loadstar tl Meteors of Frenc these were not which hastened, worst distresses. that timē, he cc official Superiors lacerated, we sl chanical implen cruel: and shri deeper self-seclu than ever. His is a life of fragn yond the melan continuance,—i such offered, an they passed aw: world begins to him; for a mise than friends. § and a thousand nality is what l that are *not* wit him! For is French Revolut in that one act tions, political peared, were fal tated little to c Mæcenases ther it. There is re

¹ [Too much w with certain offic matter altogether time in Burns's ir

was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! "If he entered an inn at midnight after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!"¹ Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labour itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the "thoughtless follies" that had "laid him low," the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts for ever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier

¹ Lockhart.

opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than sourdness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer

exists; except in the legal affinity, it is not recognized as a disinterested observer of man's nature, "that is, pe- furtherance, to be him that gives, and in regard to outwa- the rule, as, in reg- and must be the re- effectual help to: rest contented with self. Such, we say: Honour; natural; sentiment of Pri- encourage as the morality. Many Burns; but no on question whether even a pension fi- galled and encu- assisted him.

Still less, there with another cla- accuse the high- ruined Burns by We have already direct pecuniary would have been proved very effec- however, that m- that many a pois- warded from his ment in his pat- the powerful; an from high places, atmosphere more then breathing n- some fewer pang- and for Burns it all his pride, he v- exaggerated gra- dually befriended cursed, needed r- all events, the y- his calling mig- his own scheme other to be of se- been a luxury, nobility to have however, did ar- attempt, or wis-

exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "Patronage," that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed;" cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as, in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honour; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted

against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakespeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence and haws*? How, indeed, could the "nobility and gentry of his native land" hold out any help to this "Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country?" Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumb-screws, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little Babylons* they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavours are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens," given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of

Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favour to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a mad-house; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted" they the Prophets," not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes, that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of any external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more can lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again, nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism

that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Verse-monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him; and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavouring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavour to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their

glory to conquer. traitor; and wrot *Understanding* sl garret. Was Mil he composed *Par* but fallen from a impoverished; in compassed round, and found fit aud Cervantes finish I and in prison? I which Spain ackn without even the leather, as the snatched any mor

And what, then wanted? Two th to us, are indispe had a true, religi a single, not a d They were not self but seekers and better than Self. their object; but of Patriotism, of the other form, e which cause they ing nor called o something wond counting it blesse be spent. Thus t however curiosl but the Invisibl man's reasonable a celestial fount into gladness an their otherwise word, they willec things were sub vient; and the: The wedge will be sharp and sing is bruised in pie

Part of this su their age; in wh were still practi believed in: but to themselves. different. His tical points, is enjoyment, in a

glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost*? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Arcuana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager¹ snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden calf of Self-love," however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the

¹ Alonso Ercilla y Zuñiga, the Spanish poet.

only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light forms of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, "a great Perhaps."

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wild fire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, "independent;" but it was necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; "to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would for ever refuse him." He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect, and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. "I would not for much," says Jean Paul, "that I had been born richer." And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often

only the latter." But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, "the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage."

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, may prescribe, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to enjoy life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run amuck against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forebore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honours, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have "purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the

character of Satan;" for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he cannot serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now—we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there; they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history,—twice told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: "He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle

into a modish ballad and besing the idols will not fail to reward him; he will endure to live in the world. Burns could not live in the fire of their own he better it was for them. For it is not in the small, but in the expugnable citadel of Byron's or a Burns the great stand aloof to reverence him. wealth with favour; like the costliest loveliest amaranth. be mistaken. A t they can hire by minister of their occasional verses, they cannot be their partisan. Al let no such union be of the Sun work Dray-horse? His path is through the all lands; will he dragging ale for each door?

But we must stop here, which would lengthen. We had public moral character we must forbear. him as guilty before the average; nay, less guilty than others at a tribunal far: the Plebiscite of a pronounced, he is less worthy of blame. But the world is full of men of such moments of such moments of which this one stance: It decide

into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favour of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favour and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar inclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

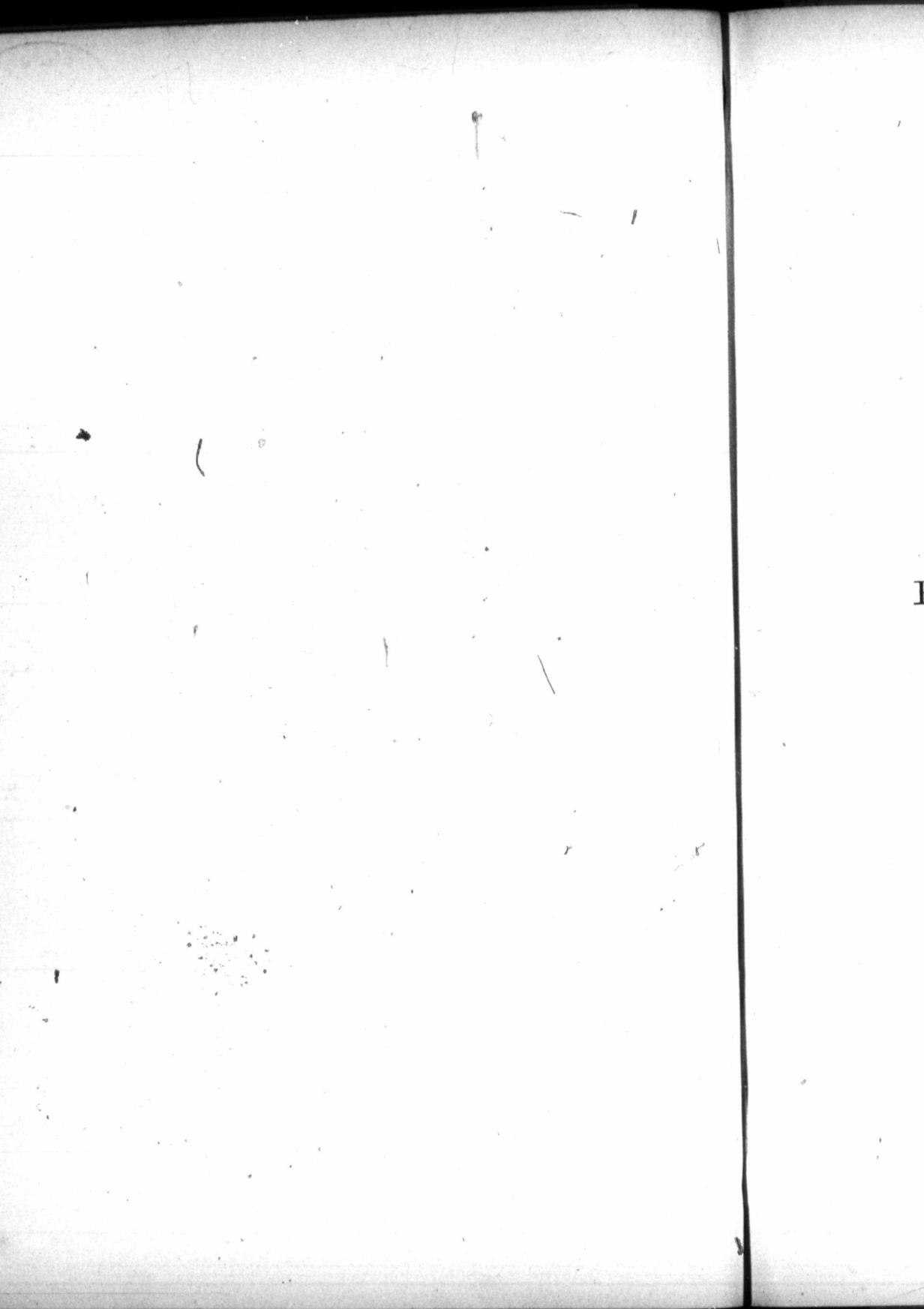
But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay, from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men, unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by

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dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain¹ will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

¹ [Valclusa, the romantic valley of Vaucluse, to which Petrarch retired in 1338, and in which he lived for several years in literary retirement.]



POEMS AND SONGS.



1944
10/10/44



According to
in by "a blast
got the fact co
or ten days lat

¹This was the
sung to, and he to
was to be sung
Templeton, the f
it to a slightly v
gh ye war dead
words are now ge

But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me¹ on thee, Robin.
Robin was, &c.²

every

A F

The following
for Captain Rid

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAU.³

The date of the composition of the following piece cannot be fixed with certainty. It is one of the *Reliques* recovered by Cromek and first published in 1808.

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him,
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care
E'er mair come near him.

no more

frighten

To tell the truth, they seldom fasht him;
Except the moment that they crusht him;
For sune as chance or fate had husht 'em,
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lasht 'em,
And thought it sport.—

troubled

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roos'd him then!⁴

country work

both active strong

literary

praised

¹A term of congratulatory endearment equivalent to "how fond or proud I am of you."

²This song is found in the Glenriddell abridgment of the poet's first Common-place Book, between September 1784 and June 1785. Another version of it was copied into the Edinburgh Common-place Book, 1787-1790, the first verse and chorus of which read thus:—

There was a birkie born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Davie.

Chorus—Leeze me on thy curly pow,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie,
Leeze me on thy curly pow
Thou'se aye my dainty Davie.

Line 3 in the fourth stanza runs:—

He'll gie his daddie's name a blaw.

³"Ruisseaux—a play on his own name."—CROMEK. *Ruisseaux*, in French, signifies a brook or burn—hence the plural *Ruisseaux* = Burns.

⁴"Cromek found this fragment among the papers of Burns, and printed it in the *Reliques*."—ALLAN

CUNNINGHAM. It was probably intended to close the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems, but was fortunately supplanted by the "Bard's Epitaph." Burns had studied French for a week or two with Murdoch in Ayr, and, to quote Gilbert Burns, "he had acquired such a knowledge of the language, as to read and understand any French author in prose." And in a letter to Peter Hill, bookseller, Edinburgh, written from Ellisland on 2d March, 1790, Burns himself says:—"A good copy, too, of Molière in French I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also; but comic authors chiefly, though I should wish to have Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire too." He was rather inclined to make a display of any out-of-the-way acquirement he had. Hence the French *Ruisseaux* for Burns. But there may be here also a reference to Rousseau, who is most likely the person he had in his eye when he wrote in his Common-place Book in May, 1785,— "I sometimes think the character of a certain great man I have read of somewhere is very much *apropos* to myself—that he was a compound of great talent and great folly."

¹Jean is, of course, noticed that the resemblance to "Win' can blaw."

²This has no other Whigs, but to the Presbyterian section, among

A FRAGMENT—"ONE NIGHT AS I DID WANDER."

TUNE—"John Anderson my Jo."

The following lines were included in Burns's abridgment of his first Common-place Book, written for Captain Riddell, under date 1785.

One night as I did wander,
 When corn begins to shoot,
 I sat me down to ponder,
 Upon an auld tree root:
 Auld Ayr ran by before me,
 And bicker'd to the seas;
 A cushat crooded o'er me,
 That echoed thro' the braes.

hurried
 cooed
 hill slopes

FRAGMENTARY SONG—MY JEAN.

TUNE—"The Northern Lass."

Though cruel fate should bid us part,
 Far as the pole and line;
 Her dear idea round my heart
 Should tenderly entwine.
 Tho' mountains frown and deserts howl,
 And oceans roar between;
 Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
 I still would love my Jean.¹

EPISTLE TO JOHN GOUDIE,³

KILMARNOCK,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS, AUGUST, 1785.

O Goudie! terror o' the Whigs,²
 Dread o' black coats and rev'rend wigs!
 Soor Bigotry, on his last legs,
 Girns an' looks back,
 Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
 May seize you quick.

sour
 grins

¹Jean is, of course, Jean Armour; and it will be noticed that the last quatrain has a striking family resemblance to the second in "Of a' the Airts the Win' can blow." The phrase "her dear idea" occurs in his mention of Jean in the "Epistle to Davie."

²This has no allusion to the political party called *Whigs*, but to the orthodox or Old Light portion of the Presbyterian church, as opposed to the New Light section, among whom views that had a rationalistic

flavour to some extent prevailed. For some information regarding the New and Old Light parties, see Lockhart's *Life*, chap. iii.

³John Goldie or Goudie was the most talented and remarkable man of all Burns's local contemporaries to whom he addressed poetical epistles; and yet the epistle here given is one of his poorest. In addition to his other claims to remembrance, Goudie was the very first efficient patron of Burns, having been

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
 But now she's got an unco ripple,¹ terrible tearing
 Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,²
 Nigh unto death;
 See how she fetches at the thrapple, throat
 An' gasps for breath.

Enthusiasm 's past redemption,
 Gaen in a galloping consumption, gone
 Not a' the quacks wi' a' their gumption,
 Will ever mend her.
 Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption, gives
 Death soon will end her.

'Tis you and Taylor³ are the chief,
 Wha are to blame for this mischief;
 But gin the L—d's ain folks gat leave, if own got
 A toom tar barrel empty
 And twa red peats wad send relief, would
 An' end the quarrel.

For me, my skill's but very sma',
 An' skill in prose I've nane ava';
 But quietlenswise, between us twa, quietly
 Weel may ye speed!
 And tho' they sud you sair misca', should sorely abuse
 Ne'er fash your head. trouble

E'en swinge the dogs, and thresh them sicker; surely
 The mair they squeel aye chap the thicker; always lay on
 And still 'mang hands a hearty bicker beaker
 O' something stout;
 It gars an othor's pulse beat quicker, makes author's
 And helps his wit.

There's naething like the honest nappy! ale
 Whaur'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
 Or women sonsie, saft, an' sappy, plump
 'Tween morn and morn,
 As them wha like to taste the drappie, little drop
 In glass or horn?

I've seen me daz'd upon a time;
 I scarce could wink or see a styme; spark

¹ Tearing or torture, as from passing through a rippling-comb, a toothed instrument, through which flax, hemp, &c., were drawn to separate the seed from the stalk.

² Mr. Russell's Kirk.—R. B.—There is a double joke here. To give one's name up in the chapel, is to give in one's name at church, to be prayed for. But chapel, while it means a place of worship generally,

points directly to Mr. Russell's kirk then, and long after, locally called the Chapel, the High Church parish not having been formed till 1811.

³ Dr. Taylor of Norwich.—R. B.—Dr. Taylor was the author of a work entitled *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin proposed to Free and Candid Examination*, favourite reading of the New Light party in Ayrshire at this time.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Just ae hauf-mutchkin does me prime— | one half-pint |
| Ought less is little— | |
| Then back I rattle on the rhyme, | |
| As gleg's a whittle. ¹ | sharp knife |

THIRD EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK.

Cromek printed this poem in 1808 from a MS. preserved by Burns, and discovered among "the sweepings of his study," which Dr. Currie and his collaborators did not consider worthy of publication. Both Allan Cunningham and Dr. Chambers erroneously state that it was first published by Lapraik in a volume of his own poems published in 1788.

Sept. 13th, 1785.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Guid speed an' furdur to you, Johnnie, | furtherance |
| Guid health, hale han's, and weather bonnie; | hands |
| Now when ye're njckan down fu' cannie | cutting quietly |
| The staff o' bread, | |
| May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y | |
| To clear your head. | |
| May Boreas never thresh your rigs, | shake out the corn on your ridges |
| Nor kick your rickles aff their legs, | heaps or small stacks |
| Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' haggs | bog-holes |
| Like drivin' wrack; | |
| But may the tapmast grain that wags | topmost |
| Come to the sack. | |
| I'm bizzie too, an' skelpin' at it, | working vigorously |
| But bitter, daudin' showers hae wat it, ² | pelting wetted |
| Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it | got |
| Wi' muckle wark, | much trouble |
| An' took my jocteleg ³ an' whatt it, | knife cut (whetted) |
| Like ony clerk. | |
| It's now twa month that I'm your debtor, | |
| For your braw, nameless, dateless letter, | fine |
| Abusin' me for harsh ill nature | |
| On holy men, | |
| While deil a hair yoursel' ye're better, | |
| But mair profane. | more |

¹The first five stanzas of this epistle, written in August, 1785, first appeared among the pieces published in Glasgow by Thomas Stewart in 1801. Stanzas six and seven are from the Glenriddell MS., published in 1874, which also gives the last two stanzas as concluding the poem. These were originally found pencilled in the poet's Edinburgh Common-place Book, and were published by Cromek in 1808. Cunningham says that they formed part of the first "Epistle to Lapraik," and that he had seen a copy of which they formed a part, coming before the third stanza from the end. They certainly might come in there quite as well as here.

²This refers to the harvest of the year (1785), which was very stormy and late, so much so that the poet, in his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, declares that he and his brother lost half their crop.

³"*Jocteleg*, a folding-knife. The etymology of this word remained long unknown, till not many years ago, that an old knife was found having this inscription *Jacques de Liège*, the name of the cutler. Thus it is in exact analogy with *Andrea di Ferrara*."—LORD HAILES.

This etymology receives confirmation from the fact mentioned by Grose, that Scotland was formerly supplied with cutlery from Liège.

¹This is the name of the song "Maggie La sportively borrowe self on being a "r

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
 On gown, an' ban,¹ an' douce black bonnet,² grave
 Is grown right eerie now she's done it, frightened
 Lest they should blame her,
 An' rouse their holy thunder on it,
 And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
 That I, a simple, kintra bardie, country
 Should meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
 Wha, if they ken me, know
 Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
 Lowse h-ll upon me. unloose

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
 Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,
 Their three-mile prayers, and hauf-mile graces,³
 Their raxin' conscience, stretching
 Whase greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
 Waur nor their nonsense. worse than

There's Gaun⁴ miska't waur than a beast, abused worse
 Wha has mair honour in his breast
 Than mony scores as guid's the priest
 Wha sae abus't him ;
 An' may a bard no crack his jest
 What way they've use't him?

See him the poor man's friend in need,
 The gentleman in word an' deed,⁵
 An' shall his fame an' honour bleed
 By worthless skullums, wretches
 An' not a muse erect her head
 To cowe the blellums? frighten the babblers

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
 To gie the rascals their deserts,
 I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
 An' tell aloud
 Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
 To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
 Nor am I even the thing I could be,
 But twentv times, I rather would be
 An atheist clean,

¹The black gown and cambric bands, forming the characteristic dress of the Presbyterian clergyman.

²The popular term applied to a church elder.

³Learn three-mile prayers and half-mile graces.

—Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, July, 1786.

⁴Gavin Hamilton.—R. B.

⁵That he's the poor man's friend in need,
 The gentleman in word and deed,
 It's no thro' terror of d-mn-tion, &c.

—Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
 An' if impertinent I've been,
 Impute it not, good sir, to ane
 Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
 But to his utmost would befriend
 Ought that belang'd ye.¹

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

This epistle was probably penned about October, 1785.

AULD NEIBOR,

I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
 For your auld-farrant, frien'ly letter;
 Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
 Ye speak sae fair:
 For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
 Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
 Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,
 To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
 O' war'ly cares,
 Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
 Your auld, gray hairs.

But, Davie, lad, I'm rede ye're glaikit;
 I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit:
 An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
 Until ye fyke;
 Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,
 Be hain't wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
 Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
 Whyles daz'd wi' love, whyles daz'd wi' drink,
 Wi' jads or masons;
 An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think
 Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
 Commen' me to the bardie clan;
 Except it be some idle plan
 O' rhymin' clink,

neighbour

sagacious
mustbabble
must serve

elbow jerk and shake

struggle

worldly

fondle

informed thoughtless

if should be beaten
fidgetsuch hands spared exertion
spared

make rhyme

sometimes

jades

always too

fine

This is one
78 in the first

¹The gentleman to whom this epistle is addressed, was assistant to the Rev. Peter Wodrow, minister of Tarbolton, and an adherent of the New Light party. It inclosed a copy of "Holy Willie's Prayer," which he had requested from the author. M'Math fell into

dissipated habits, resigned his charge, and afterwards enlisted as a common soldier. His misfortunes and miseries arose from, or were intensified by, his having become a hypochondriac. He died poor and neglected, in the isle of Mull, in 1825.

²This epistle was published in Sillar, published by the person to whom the epistle to Davie was addressed.
³Miss Margaret Mrs. Gavin Hamilton landed proprietor in the autumn of 1785, and was distinguished for her spirit and beauty. She stood to be betrothed to the representative of the old

The devil haet, that I sud ban, the devil a bit should swear
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin', no
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin':
But just the pouchie put the nieve in, pocket fist
 An' while ought's there,
Then, hiltie skiltie, we gae scribevin', helter skelter careering
 An' fash nae mair. bother no more

Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure, rhyme's the thing!
My chief, amaist my onfy pleasure, almost
At hame, a-fiel', at wark or leisure,
 The Muse, poor hizzie! girl (hussy)
Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure, coarse
 She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie; hold
The war' may play you monie a shavie; trick
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
 Tho' e'er sae pur,
Na, even tho' limp'in' wi' the spavie spavin
 Frae door to door.¹

SONG—YOUNG PEGGY BLOOMS.²

TUNE—"Last time I cam' o'er the muir."

This is one of the poet's earliest songs contributed to Johnson's *Musical Museum*: it stands No 78 in the first volume of that work, and was written in October, 1785.

Young Peggy blooms our bonniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With early gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

¹ This epistle was prefixed to the poems of David Sillar, published at Kilmarnock, 1789. In regard to the person to whom it is addressed see note to "Epistle to Davie," vol. i.

² Miss Margaret, or Peggy Kennedy, a relative of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton, was the daughter of a Carrick landed proprietor. Burns met her in Mauchline during the autumn of 1785, and was much taken with her spirit and beauty. She was seventeen, and understood to be betrothed to Captain MacDonal, the representative of the oldest and richest family in Galloway.

Burns wrote to her a respectful letter, in which this song was inclosed. Her subsequent history is most painful. Says Mr. Chambers: "While thus in the fair way to a dignified position in life, the powers of Honour, Love, and Truth had already been outraged, and a train of circumstances commenced, which was to end in the loss of her good name and her early death." It is supposed, on not very conclusive evidence, however, that her sad fate suggested to the poet the deathless "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon."

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
 Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
 Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,
 Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
 But here, alas! for me nae mair
 Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
 Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,
 Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

no more

HALLOWEEN.¹

The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own.—R. B., 1786.—Halloween or Halloweven is the eve or vigil of All-Saints' Day (also called All-Hallows or Hallowmas, 1st November).

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art.—GOLDSMITH.

Upon that night, when fairies light
 On Cassillis Downans² dance,
 Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
 On sprightly coursers prance;
 Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
 Beneath the moon's pale beams;

leas

¹ Halloween is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.—R. B.

"Halloween" is now almost an obsolete word, and the liveliest of all festivals that used to usher in the winter with one long night of mirthful mockery of superstitious fancies, not unattended with stirrings of imaginative fears in many a simple breast, is gone with many customs of the good old time, not among town-folks only, but dwellers in rural parishes far withdrawn from the hum of crowds, where all such rites originate and latest fall into desuetude. The present wise generation of youngsters care little or nothing about a poem which used to drive their grandfathers and grandmothers half-mad with merriment, when boys and girls gathered in a circle round some choice reciter, who, though perhaps endowed with no great memory for grammar, had half of Burns by heart. Many of them, doubtless, are of opinion that it is a silly affair.

In practice extinct, to elderly people it survives in poetry; and there the body of the harmless superstition, in its very form and presence, is

embalmed."—PROF. WILSON.—Professor Wilson is here a little too sweeping in his statements. Halloween has now, no doubt, lost much of its importance as a popular festival, but it is still (1886) kept up to some little extent both in town and country. Probably Burns's own poem has had a good deal to do with keeping it alive.

² Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassillis.—R. B.—Cassillis House or Castle stands on a beautiful *haugh* on the left bank of the Doon, about 4 miles north-east of Maybole. The lands, and probably also the castle of Cassillis, appear to have passed, in the reign of David II., from a family named Montgomery, into the possession of Sir John Kennedy of Dunure, direct male ancestor of the present Marquis of Ailsa. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it must have been the chief residence of this powerful race, as David, third Lord Kennedy, was, about 1510, created Earl of Cassillis. This nobleman fell at Flodden, with many of his followers. Tradition tells a well-known tale in connection with Cassillis Castle and its owners. While John, the sixth earl, was attending the Assembly of Divines at Westminster

There, up the cove,¹ to stray an' rove
 Among the rocks and streams
 To sport that night:

Among the bonnie winding banks,
 Where Doon rins, wimplin', clear, runs

in 1643, his consort is said to have been seduced away from this house by a party of gypsies, supposed to have been headed by a lover in disguise; the consequence of this imprudence was her confinement for life in a tower belonging to her husband in the neighbouring town of Maybole, while those who had decoyed her away were hanged on a tree in front of the castle. These circumstances are more particularly related in the old ballad of *Johnnie Faa*, which is sung to a beautiful air; but it is proper to state that great doubt hangs over them. In a music-book, known from unquestionable evidence to have been written before 1620, this very air is found, under the title of "Lady Cassillis's Lilt;" which evinces that it could not have been composed for the wife of the sixth earl (that lady having been born in 1607), in whatever way the verses of the ballad may have taken their origin. Cassillis Castle continued to be the principal residence of the family till the extinction of the main line in 1759, when the titles were adjudged to Sir Thomas Kennedy, of Colzean, a son of the third earl. (See below.) Cassillis Castle, however, is still one of the seats of the family. The Cassillis Downans are three or four small hills rising about a quarter of a mile to the south of the castle, near the road between Maybole and Dalrymple. The largest—that nearest to the house—appears to be three hundred feet above the level of the Doon; the second is somewhat lower; and one or two others are greatly less marked. They are covered with green sward, through which, in some places, the rock may be seen; and hence Burns has described them in the note as "rocky." On the top of the highest there is a circular mound, with a breach in it to the west, as if designed for a means of access. It is probable that this was an early fort, more particularly as the farm on the slope of the hill bears the name of Dunree—obviously Dun-rioh, the king's castle. The peculiar forms of these hillocks, and their rising in the midst of a generally level country, are circumstances which could not fail to excite superstitious ideas in an unlettered people. They were, accordingly, down to Burns's time, regarded as the work of fairies, and a peculiar scene of their midnight revels. In reality, they are masses of trap.

¹A noted cavern near Colean House, called The Cove of Colean; which, as Cassillis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.—R. B.—Colzean Castle (Burns's spelling corresponds with the common pronunciation), the principal seat of the Marquises of Ailsa (for that title was bestowed in 1831 on the fourteenth Earl of Cassillis), is situated upon the verge of a great basaltic cliff, on the coast of Carrick, about two miles from the village of Kirkoswald. With marine sublimity on the one side, and the extreme of sylvan beauty on the other, it is scarcely possible to imagine, a situation more worthy of the chief of whose ancestors it was said—

Twixt Wigton and the town o' Ayr,
 Portpatrick and the cruives of Cree,
 Nae man need think for to bide there,
 Unless he court wi' Kennedie.

The lands of Colzean in the sixteenth century were the property of Sir Thomas Kennedy, second son of Gilbert, third Earl of Cassillis. The former castle, connected with the lands, was built soon after by this individual. Sir Archibald Kennedy of Colzean, great-grandson of Sir Thomas, is said to have acquired some notoriety as a *persecutor* (of the Covenanters), and tradition states, that after the Revolution, he was sometimes obliged for his safety to the *coves* (that is *caves*) beneath his mansion. By his wife, one of the daughters of General David Leslie, Lord Newark, he had four daughters, the second of whom, Susanna, distinguished for extraordinary beauty, became the wife of Alexander, ninth Earl of Eglinton. In her youth she patronized Ramsay, who dedicates the "Gentle Shepherd" to her; and in her old age she received a visit from Dr. Johnson, at her dotarial seat of Auchans, near Dundonald. On the extinction of the main line of the Cassillis family, in the person of John, the eighth earl, in 1759, the title and family estates became the inheritance of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Colzean, who accordingly—though not without some litigation—became ninth Earl of Cassillis. It was now deemed necessary that the house of Colzean should be rebuilt; and this task was accordingly commenced in 1777 by David, the tenth earl, brother of the preceding. The plan of the new mansion was by Robert Adam. It presents, along the verge of the precipice, a range of lofty castellated masses, and with its out-buildings, splendid terraced garden, &c., it covers an area of four acres. The impression conveyed by the mansion, on approaching it through the far-spreading glades of an ancient park, is that of baronial dignity, affluence, and taste; surveyed from the sea, or from the beach, it suggests the idea of those eyrie-like fortresses of old, which took so much strength from nature as to appear to smile defiance at all the hostile efforts of mere human power. The interior of the castle is remarkable for an extensive and valuable collection of arms and armour. The coves are situated directly underneath the castle. They appear simply natural chinks left in the basalt in the process of its volcanic formation. Burns, during his residence near Kirkoswald, must have often heard of their reputation as haunts of the fairies. They are six in number, and are thus described in the Rev. Mr. Biggar's statistical account of the parish of Kirkoswald, written in the end of the last century: "Of the three towards the west, the largest has its entry as low as high-water mark. The roof is about fifty feet high, and has the appearance as if two large rocks had fallen together, forming a Gothic arch, though

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COLLEEN CASTLE.
WITH THE FAINT COVER.

Wheeler & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh.

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Where Bruce¹ ance rul'd the martial ranks, once
 An' shook his Carrick spear,
 Some merry, friendly, country-folks
 Together did convene,
 To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks, nuts pull colewort plants
 An' haud their Halloween hold
 Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat, spruce
 Mair braw than when they're fine; more well-dressed
 Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe show
 Hearts leal, an' warm, and kin': loyal
 The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs, so smart love-knots
 Weel knotted on their garten, garter
 Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs, extremely bashful chatter
 Gar lasses' hearts gang startin' make
 Whiles fast at night. sometimes

Then first and foremost thro' the kail, coleworts
 Their stocks² maun a' be sought ance; plants must
 They steek their een, an' graip, an' wale, close their eyes grope choose
 For muckle anes an' straught anes. big ones and straight ones
 Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift, half-witted drove
 An' wander'd thro' the bow-kail, cabbage
 An' pou't, for want o' better shift, pulled
 A runt was like a sow-tail, stem
 Sae bow't that night. so crooked

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane, earth or none
 They roar and cry a' throu'ther; through each other
 The vera wee things, todlin', rin very
 Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther; shoulder
 An' gif the custoc's sweet or sour, if inner stem
 Wi' joctelegs they taste them; pocket-knives

very irregular; it extends inwards about two hundred feet, and varies in breadth. It communicates with the other two, which are both considerably less, but of much the same irregular form. Towards the east are the other three coves, which likewise communicate with each other. They are nearly of the same height and figure with the others; but their dimensions have not been ascertained. To the largest of the three westmost coves [those immediately under the castle] is a door or entry, built of freestone with a window three feet above the door, of the same kind of work; above both of these is an apartment, from which might be sent down whatever could annoy the assailants of the door." We have seen reason to surmise, that this mason work is as old as the former mansion of Colzean: it gives the place all the appearance of having been designed as a habitation, and one calculated to protect its inmates from hostile assault.

¹ The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.—R. B.

² The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a *stock*, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is *tocher*, or fortune; and the taste of the *custoc*, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or to give them their ordinary appellation, the *runts*, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question.—R. B.

| | |
|--|---|
| Syne coziely, aboon the door, Wi' cannie care they place them To lie that night. | then snugly above gentle |
| The lasses staw frae 'mang them a' To pou their stalks o' corn; ¹ But Rab slips out, an' jinks about, Behint the muckle thorn: He grippet Nelly hard and fast; Loud skirl'd a' the lasses; But her tap-pickle maist was lost, When kiutlin' in the fause-house ² Wi' him that night. | stole from among pull dodges screeched cuddling |
| The auld guidwife's weel-hoordnet nits ³ Are round an' round divided, An' monie lads' and lasses' fates, Are there that night decided: Some kindle, couthie, side by side, An' burn thegither trimly; Some start awa wi' saucie pride, And jump out-owre the chimlie Fu' high that night. | well-hoarded nuts lovingly together chimney |
| Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie ee; Wha 'twas she wadna tell; But this is <i>Jock</i> , an' this is <i>me</i> , She says in to hersel': He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him, As they wad never mair part; Till, fuff! he started up the lum, And Jean had e'en a sair heart To see't that night. | heedful eye would not blazed would chimney sore |
| Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt, Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie; An' Mary, ⁴ nae doubt, took the drunt, To be compar'd to Willie: Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling, An' her ain fit it brunt it; While Willie lap, and swoor, by jing! 'Twas just the way he wanted To be that night. | cabbage-stem burnt prudish pet leaped own foot swore |

¹ They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *top-pickle*, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.—R. B.

² When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a *fause-house*.—R. B.

³ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name

the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.—R. B.

⁴ Currie altered *Mary* here to *Mallie* in his edition of our poet's works, to the great displeasure of one of Burns's editors—the Rev. Hamilton Paul—who was at the trouble of entering into a pretty long dissertation to prove the propriety of here using the full name *Mary*, and in other parts of the verse its diminutives, *Mallie* and *Mall*.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
 She pits hersel' an' Rob in;
 In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
 Till white in ase they're sobbin':
 Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
 She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
 Rob, stownlins, prie'd her bonnie mou',
 Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
 Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
 She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
 And slips out by hersel':
 She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
 An' to the kiln she goes then,
 An' darklins grapit for the bauks,
 And in the blue-clue¹ throws then,
 Right fear't that night.

An' aye she win't, an' aye she swat,
 I wat she made nae jaukin';
 Till something held within the pat,
 Guid L—d! but she was quaukin'!
 But whether 'twas the deil himsel',
 Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
 Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
 She didna wait on talkin',
 To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her granny says,
 "Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
 I'll eat the apple² at the glass,
 I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
 She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
 She notic't na, an aizle brunt
 Her braw new worstet apron
 Out thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!³
 I daur you try sic sportin',
 As seek the foul Thief ony place,
 For him to spae your fortune:

¹ Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and, darkling, throw into the *pot* a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue of the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand *wha hauds!* i.e. who holds? an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.—R. B.

² Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.—R. B.

³ A technical term in female scolding.—*Burns's Glossary*.—A "skelpie limmer" is a hussy that deserves slapping.

Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' dee'd deleeret
On sic a night.

many a one
delirious

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,¹
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' aye a rantin' kirm we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

one harvest
remember it last night
thoughtless girl

extremely
jovial harvest-home

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:³
He gat hemp-seed,⁴ I mind it weel,
An' he made unco light o't;
But monie a day was by himsel',
He was sae fairly frighted
That vera night."

leader of the reapers²

son child

remember
very
beside himself

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense.
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

got fighting
swore

reached bag

then

He marches thro' among the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin';
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' hauls at his curpin':
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,

frightened
dung-fork
drags crupper

¹ Battle of Sheriffmuir, Nov. 1715, between the Royalists under the Duke of Argyll, and the Jacobites under the Earl of Mar.

² Lit. stubble-ridge; hence, the reaper that took the ridge next to the part of the field already reaped.

³ There is no place so named in Kyle or Carrick. A name was needed of a certain length, accent, and capacity for rhyme; hence the above coinage.

⁴ Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-

seed; harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, "Hemp-seed, I saw thee, hemp-seed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me, and shaw thee," that is, show thyself: in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me, and harrow thee."—R. B.

An' her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee,
As fast this night."

He whistl'd up "Lord Lenox' march"
To keep his courage cheerie;
Although his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouter gae a keek,
An' tumbld wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld came rinnin' out,
To hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
Till, stop! she trotted thro' them a';—
And wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night!

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen
To winn three wechts o' naething;¹
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',²
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattled up the wa',
An' she cried, L—d, preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

¹ This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger that the *being*, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a *wecht*; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition

will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.—R. B.—The *wecht* is an implement shaped like a sieve, being a round shallow wooden vessel with a bottom made of hide or skin, used for lifting quantities of grain.

² She first calls out to the herd-boy, to give her a little courage from assurance of his proximity.

so frightened and nervous

groan and grunt
shoulder glance
stagger

halting
crook-backed

the sow
astir

would have gone
winnow measures

herself alone

put
herd-boy few nuts

gentle turn

gives a call
then boldly
rat wall

dung-pit

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ughtless girl

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I can conveniently
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say, "Come after
thysel: in which
It the harrowing,
ow thee."—R. B.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice :
 They hecht him some fine braw ane ;
 It chanc'd the stack he faddom'd thrice,¹
 Was timmer-propt for thrawin' :
 He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak,
 For some black, gruesome carlin ;
 An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
 Till skin in blypes came haulin'
 Aff's nieves that night.

urged
 promised
 fathomed
 knotty
 hideous hag
 uttered an oath
 shreds peeling
 hands

A wanton widow Leezie was,
 As canty as a kittlen ;
 But, och ! that night, amang the shaws,
 She got a fearfu' settlin' !
 She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
 An' owre the hill gaed scievin' ;
 Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,²
 To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
 Was bent that night.

cheerful kitten
 wooded dells

went careering

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays, sometimes over a rock streamlet
 As thro' the glen it wimpl't :
 Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays ;
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't ;
 Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle ;
 Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel,
 Unseen that night.³

precipice
 eddy
 hurrying
 popped sloping banks

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
 Between her and the moon,
 The deil, or else an outler quey,
 Gat up an' gae a croon :
 Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool ; almost leaped from its case (hull)
 Near lav'rock-height she jumpit,
 But mist a fit, an' in the pool
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
 Wi' a plunge that night.

ferns
 outlying heifer
 gave a moan
 lark
 lost her footing
 ears

¹ Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *bear stack*, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—R. B. —The particular stack mentioned in the text was propped up by pieces of timber, having settled or got twisted (*thrasen*) to one side. One of the props was a moss-oak or bog-oak, such as are found embedded in peat-bogs.

² You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake ; and sometime near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the

grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.—R. B.—See the song of "Tam Glen" for an interesting reference to this spell, which in the case of Tam's sweetheart was used with the desired effect in calling up the likeness of Tam.

³ "Those who understand the Scottish dialect will allow this to be one of the finest instances of description which the records of poetry afford. Though of a very different nature, it may be compared, in point of excellence, with Thomson's description of a river swollen by the rains of winter bursting through the straits that confine its torrents."—CURRIE. The verb to *cook* used above means literally to appear and disappear by turns.

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³ Sov
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⁴ In
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 Mayn

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
 In proving foresight may be vain:
 The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
 Gang aft a-gley,¹
 An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
 For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
 The present only toucheth thee:
 But, och! I backward cast my ee,
 On prospects drear;
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear,²

THE JOLLY BEGGARS.³

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| When lyart leaves bestrew the yird, | withered earth |
| Or, wavering like the bauckie-bird, ⁴ | bat |
| Bedim cauld Boreas' blast; | |
| When hailstones drive wi' bitter skyte, | stroke |
| And infant frosts begin to bite, | |
| In hoary cranreuch drest: | hoar-frost |
| Ae night at e'en, a merry core | corps |
| O' randie gangrel bodies, | loose-living vagrant persons |
| In Poesie Nansie's ⁵ held the splore, | frolic |
| To drink their orra duddies: | superfluous rags |

¹ This phrase:—

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley,—

and a couplet in the "Address to the Louse"—

O, wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us,
 To see oursels as others see us!—

are so often quoted as to have become proverbial.

² "How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The 'Daisy' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee cowering timorous beastie," cast forth after all its provident pains to "thole the sleety dribble, and cranreuch cauld."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

³ Composed apparently at Mossiel before the close of 1785, and regarded by Burns himself as of little value, probably because his mother and brother looked on it with suspicion on account of the looseness of some of its sentiments. In September, 1793, he wrote to George Thomson that he had kept no copy of it, and had in fact forgotten its existence. On 3d August, 1799, the "Jolly Beggars" was published in chap-book form by Stewart and Melke, Glasgow, with the exception of a portion which John Richmond

had taken with him to Edinburgh; and two years later it was republished by Stewart in a complete form, Richmond having in the meantime supplied the missing portion. Along with it Stewart also printed other POEMS ASCRIBED TO ROBERT BURNS, THE AYRSHIRE BARD, not contained in any edition of his works hitherto published. So popular were these additional poems, especially the "Jolly Beggars," that another edition of a smaller size was issued from the same press during the same year.

⁴ The older writers call it merely *the bak*; thus in Gawain Douglas's metrical translation of Virgil:—

The sonnys licht is nauer the wers, traist me,
 Althochte the bak his bricht beames doth flee.

The comparison of the fluttering of the dry and withered leaves in the wintry blast, to the "wavering" flight of the bat is peculiarly appropriate.

⁵ Poesie Nansie's, the scene of the "Jolly Beggars," is still pointed out in Mauchline. It was one of those places of resort in which the lowest of mankind—those ambiguous wretches who hang upon the skirts of society—the maimed beggar, the sturdy caird, the wandering tinker, the travelling ballad-singer—found a resting-place after the fatigues of the day, and when

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Wi' quaffing and laughing, | |
| They ranted and they sang; | revelled |
| Wi' jumping and thumping | |
| The vera girdle' rang. | griddle |
| First, niest the fire, in auld red rags, | nearest |
| Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags | |
| And knapsack a' in order; | |
| His doxy lay within his arm, | |
| Wi' usquebae and blankets warm, | whisky |
| She blinket on her sodger; | |
| And aye he gies the tozie drab | tipsy |
| The tither skelpin' kiss, | other resounding |
| While she held up her greedy gab, | |
| Just like an aymous dish; ² | alms |
| Ilk smack still, did crack still, | each |
| Just like a cadger's whup, | hawker's whip |
| Then staggering, an' swaggering, | |
| He roar'd this ditty up— | |

AIR.

TUNE—"Soldier's Joy."

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
 And show my cuts and scars whêrever I come;
 This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
 When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
 Lal de daudle, &c.

My prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
 When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;³
 I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
 And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.⁴
 Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,⁵
 And there I left for witness an arm and a limb:

they lost in that "glory" which results from deep potations, the consciousness of their own degradation. John Richmond told Robert Chambers when he visited Mauchline, that one night when Burns, "Smith, the sleest pawkie thief," and Richmond were coming up the street in a state of partial intoxication, their attention was attracted by the noise of revelry issuing from this hostelry. At the instigation of Burns they went in, and entered *con spirito* into the scene of drunken frolic which they found going forward. Such was the source of the poet's inspiration, and such the scene, which a few touches of his pen have rendered immortal!

¹ The circular iron plate on which cakes are baked in Scottish households.

² The aymous dish was a wooden vessel, half plattef, half bowl, with which every professional mendicant was formerly provided as part of his accoutrements. It was used to receive the aymous or alms, which was usually made in kind.

³ The battle-ground before Quebec, where Wolfe fell in the arms of victory, September 1759.

⁴ El Moro, a strong castle that defended the entrance of the harbour of St. Iago, an island near the southern shore of Cuba; stormed and taken by the British in 1762.

⁵ The destruction of the Spanish floating batteries, during the siege of Gibraltar, in 1782, is here referred to. The services rendered by Captain Curtis on this occasion were of the highest value.

¹ Geo
1717, di
the Sp
years a

Yet let my country need me, with Elliot¹ to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

And now, tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet,²
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow the drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks, oftentimes for a home;
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of h-ll at the sound of the drum.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars sheuk

Aboon the chorus roar;

While frighted rattons backward leuk,

And seek the benmost bore:

A fairy³ fiddler frae the neuk,

He skirl'd out encore!

But up arose the martial chuck,

And laid the loud uproar.

rafters

above

rats

innermost hole

corner

screech'd

AIR.

TUNE—"Soldier Laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
So the sword I forsook for the sake of the church,
He ventur'd the soul, and I risked the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

¹George Augustus Elliot (Lord Heathfield), born 1717, died 1790, successfully defended Gibraltar against the Spaniards, during the famous siege of over three years and seven months, in 1779-83.

²"A beggar in his drink could not have laid such terms upon his callet."—SHAKESPEARE—*Othello*.

³This epithet is apparently used in the sense of little, puny.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair,
His rags regimental they flutter'd sae gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Poor Merry Andrew, in the neuk, Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie; | tinkler wench |
| They mind't na wha the chorus teuk, Between themselves they were sae busy; | |
| At length, wi' drink and courting dizzy, He stoiter'd up and made a face; | staggered |
| Then turn'd and laid a smack on Grizzy, Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace. | then |

AIR.

TUNE—"Auld Sir Symon."

| | |
|--|---------|
| Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou, Sir Knave is a fool in a session; ¹ | tipy |
| He's there but a 'prentice I trow, But I am a fool by profession. | |
| My grannie she bought me a beuk, And I held awa to the school; | book |
| I fear I my talent misteuk; But what will ye hae of a fool? | |
| For drink I would venture my neck; A hizzie's the half o' my craft; | wench |
| But what could you other expect Of ane that's avowedly daft? | crazy |
| I ance was tied up like a stirk, ² For civilly swearing and quaffing; | bullock |

¹ This seems to mean when under a criminal indictment, during the session or sitting of a court.

² Referring to the punishment of the "jougs," which was an iron collar locked round an offender's neck so as to keep standing in some exposed position.

Specimens of this instrument of punishment may still be seen, one attached to the pillar of the gate of the churchyard of Duddingston near Edinburgh, and another to the gable of the townhouse of Kilmaurs in Ayrshire.

I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,
For towsing a lass i' my daffin.

rumpling fun

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer;
There's ev'n, I'm tauld, i' the court,
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye you reverend lad
Maks faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our mountebank squad,
It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry,
The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
Gude L—d, is far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterlin',
For monie a pursie she had hooked,
And had in monie a well been douked;
Her love had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!¹
Wi' sighs and sobs, she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

next sturdy beldam

knew hook

ducked

halter

fine

AIR.

TUNE—"O an' ye were dead, guidman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lawland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

fine

CHORUS.

Sing, hey, my braw John Highlandman;
Sing, ho, my braw John Highlandman;
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg and tartan plaid,
And guid claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

kilt

Sing, hey, &c.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,
And liv'd like lords and ladies gay;

¹ "A curse befall the woeful halter." For a long time the Highlanders were notoriously given to cattle-stealing or otherwise plundering the hated Lowlander, and many of them were hanged for such offences.

The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle o'er the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there, harvest-homes we shall
And oh! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bowse about, till Daddie Care
Sings whistle o'er the lave o't.
I am, &c.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke, pick
And sun oursells about the dyke,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle o'er the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms
And while I kittie hair on thairms tickle cat-gut
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle o'er the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird, inker
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He tak's the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a roosty rapier— rusty
He swoor, by a' was swearing worth, swore
To speet him like a pliver, spit plover
Unless he wad from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly ee, poor tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended, hams
And pray'd for grace, wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.
But though his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve, laugh derisively
When thus the caird address'd her;

AIR.

TUNE—"Cloud the Caudron."

My bonny lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;¹
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation.

¹ *Tinkler* and *caird* are here treated as synonymous terms; but we have been informed, on the authority of one of the fraternity of tinkers, that there is a difference; a tinker or *tinkler* is a workman, an artificer

in brass and tin-plate, &c., a *caird* is not, the latter being merely a vagrant usually with rather loose notions as to *meum* and *tuum*. Neither tinker nor *caird* is now so common in Scotland as formerly.

I've ta'en the gold, an' been enroll'd
 In many a noble squadron;
 But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
 To go and clout the cauldron.
 I've ta'en the gold, &c.

patch

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
 Wi' a' his noise and cap'rin',
 And tak' a share wi' those that bear
 The budget and the apron.
 And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
 And by that dear Kilbagie,¹
 If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
 May I ne'er weet my craigie.
 And by that stoup, &c.

bag of tools

mug hope

wet my throat

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
 In his embraces sunk,
 Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
 And partly she was drunk.
 Sir Violino, with an air
 That show'd a man o' spunk,
 Wish'd unison between the pair,
 And made the bottle clunk
 To their health that night.

gurgle

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
 That play'd a dame a shavie,
 The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft,
 Behint the chicken cavie.
 Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,
 Tho' limpin' wi' the spavie,
 He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
 And shor'd them Dainty Davie
 O' boot that night.

trick

coop

limped leaped like mad

promised

to boot

He was a care-defying blade
 As ever Bacchus listed,
 Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
 His heart, she ever miss'd it.
 He had nae wish, but—to be glad,
 Nor want, but—when he thirsted;
 He hated nought but—to be sad:
 And thus the Muse suggested
 His sang that night.

sorely

¹A peculiar sort of whisky; so called from Kil- Burns's day sold so low as one penny per gill, the
 bagie distillery, in Clackmannanshire. It was in revenue duty being then small.

AIR.¹

TUNE—"For a' that, and a' that."

I am a bard of no regard,
 Wi' gentlefolks, and a' that:
 But Homer-like, the glowran byke,
 Frae town to town I draw that.

staring multitude
 from

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
 And twice as muckle's a' that;
 I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
 I've wife eneugh, for a' that.

one

I never drank the Muses' stank,
 Castalia's burn, and a' that;
 But there it streams, and richly reams,
 My Helicon I ca' that.

pool (or ditch)

creams

For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
 Their humble slave, and a' that,
 But lordly will, I hold it still
 A mortal sin to thraw that.

thwart

For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
 Wi' mutual love, and a' that;
 But for how long the fleeg may stang
 Let inclination law that.

fly sting

For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
 They've ta'en me in, and a' that;
 But clear your decks, and "Here's the sex!"
 I like the jads for a' that.

crazy

jades

For a' that, and a' that,
 And twice as muckle's a' that;
 My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
 They're welcome till't, for a' that.

to it

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
 Shook with a thunder of applause,
 Re-echo'd from each mouth;
 They toom'd their pocks, and pawn'd their duds,
 They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
 To quench their lowin' drouth.

emptied their bags
 cover their rumps
 burning thirst

¹The third, fourth, and fifth stanzas of this song form the second, third, and fourth of song 200 in Johnson's *Museum*; yet we find the editor of that work in a note asserting that the song was *wholly* written for that publication by Burns in 1789, that is, about four years after the verses were composed. It is almost needless to say that Burns wrote another song to this tune, that stirring lyric beginning "Is there for honest poverty," which belongs to a period nearly ten years later than this.

patch

bag of tools
 mug hope

wet my throat

gurgle

trick

coop

d leaped like mad
 promised
 to boot

sorely

penny per gill, the

Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
 The poet did request,
 To lowse his pack, and wale a sang,
 A ballad o' the best;
 He, rising, rejoicing,
 Between his twa Deborahs,
 Looks round him, and found them
 Impatient for the chorus.

over

unloose select

AIR.¹

TUNE—"Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses."

See the smoking bowl before us!
 Mark our jovial ragged ring!
 Round and round take up the chorus,
 And in raptures let us sing:

CHORUS.

A fig for those by-law protected!
 Liberty's a glorious feast!
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? What is treasure?
 What is reputation's care?
 If we lead a life of pleasure,
 'Tis no matter how or where!

A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
 Round we wander all the day;
 And at night, in barn or stable,
 Hug our doxies on the hay.

A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
 Thro' the country lighter rove?
 Does the sober bed of marriage
 Witness brighter scenes of love?

A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
 We regard not how it goes;
 Let them cant about decorum
 Who have characters to lose.

A fig, &c.

¹ Burns may have obtained a hint for this song, and even the idea of the whole cantata, from a song called "The Merry Beggars," published in the *Charmer*, two vols., London, 1751. We give two of the stanzas:—

1st Beggar—

I once was a poet at London,
 I keep my heart still full of glee;

There's no man can say that I'm undone,
 For begging's no new trade to me. ☉

Whoe'er would be merry and free,
 Let him list, and from us he may learn;
 In palaces who shall you see
 Half so happy as us in a barn?

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
 Here's to all the wandering train!
 Here's our ragged brats and callets!
 One and all cry out, Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
 Liberty's a glorious feast!
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest.¹

TRAVELLING TINKER'S SONG.²

TUNE—"Lord Breadalbane's March," or "The Bob o' Dunblane."

O merry hae I been teethin' a heckle,
 And merry hae I been shapin' a spoon;
 O merry hae I been cloutin' a kettle,
 And kissin' my Katie when a' was done.
 O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer, drive
 And a' the lang day I whistle and sing,
 A' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer, fondle wench
 And a' the lang night am as happy's a king.

¹ "The Jolly Beggars," for humorous description, and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse, and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet even in describing the movements of such a group the native taste of the poet has never suffered his pen to slide into anything coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee, and butrageous frolic of the beggars, are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags, and crutches—the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade. Nor is the art of the poet less conspicuous in the individual figures than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. . . . The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp, a stroller late the consort of a Highland ketteran or sturdy beggar,—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!' Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between 'a pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel of course. A wandering ballad-singer with a brace of doxies is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sings a song in character, and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected by vivid poetical description, is not, perhaps, to be paralleled in the English language. . . . We are at a loss to conceive any good reason why

Dr. Currie did not introduce this singular and humorous cantata into his collection. It is true, that in one or two passages the muse has trespassed slightly upon decorum, where, in the language of Scottish song,

High kilted was she
 As she gaed owre the lea.

Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet; and if from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one, and the indelicacy of the other, the respect due to that of Burns may surely claim indulgence for a few light stroke of broad humour."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

For Carlyle's opinion of this Cantata see his essay in the present vol., p. 22.

"The whole of this admirable cantata has never been in print. Two different songs, connected by a few verses of recitative matter, and which exhibited the character of a chimney-sweep and a sailor, were omitted after the first copy by the author, and seem now to be past recovery."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

² Stenhouse, after stating that he has the original copy of this humorous song in the handwriting of Burns in his hands, adds: "It seems to be a whimsical allusion to his former occupation as a flax-dresser." This is no doubt a mistake. Teething heckles (fixing the fine long metallic teeth of the heckle, a flax-dresser's instrument for combing the fibre to be spun, into their frame), horn-spoon making, and the mending of kettles, &c., were the occupations of the travelling tinker. Probably the verses were meant to form a part of the "Jolly Beggars," but on second thoughts were suppressed in favour of others.

ver

unloose select

that I'm undone,
 trade to me. ©

y and free,
 n us he may learn;
 u see
 n a barn?

Bitter in dool I lickit my winnins¹
 O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave :
 Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
 And blithe be the bird that sings on her grave.
 Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
 And come to my arms and kiss me again !
 Drunken or sober, here's to thee, Katie !
 And blest be the day I did it again.

sorrow

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.²

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
 Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short but simple annals of the poor.—GRAY.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend !
 No mercenary bard his homage pays ;
 With honest pride I scorn each selfish end ;
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise :
 To you I sing, in simple Scóttish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
 Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.³

November chill blows loud wi' angry sugh :
 The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :
 The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.⁴

sough

from plough

crows (rooks)

toil

morrow

¹ This may be rendered, "Bitterly in sorrow I ate what I won in marrying Bess," &c.

² Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, one of the poet's early friends and patrons.

³ This noble poem was written about the end of 1785; probably the first verse dedicating the poem to Mr. Aiken was added afterwards.

The "Cotter's Saturday Night" was no doubt suggested by Fergusson's "Farmer's Ingle," a poem which is much shorter and far inferior in all respects, though not without merit of its own.

⁴ That one single stanza is in itself a picture, one may say a poem, of the poor man's life. It is so imaged on the eye that we absolutely see it; but then not an epithet but shows the condition on which he holds, and the heart with which he endures, and

enjoys it. Work he must in the face of November; but God who made the year, shortens and lengthens its days for the sake of his living creatures, and has appointed for them all their hour of rest. The 'miry beasts' will soon be at supper in their clean-strawed stalls—the black'ning trains o' craws' invisibly hushed on their rocking trees; and he whom God made after his own image, that 'toil-worn cotter,' he too may lie down and sleep. There is nothing especial in his lot wherefore he should be pitied, nor are we asked to pity him, as he 'collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes:' many of us who have work to do, and do it not, may envy his contentment, and the religion that gladdens his release—'hoping the MORN in ease and rest to spend,' to such as he, in truth, a Sabbath.—PROFESSOR WILSON.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ; into the room
 A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye ;
 Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye ; chats kine
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
 But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave ; bashful and hesitating
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave ;
 Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.¹ other people

O happy love!—where love like this is found!—
 O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
 I've pacèd much this weary mortal round,
 And sage experience bids me this declare—
 "If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."²

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
 A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth,
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
 Curse on his perjurd arts! dissembling smooth;
 Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch,³ chief o' Scotia's food, wholesome porridge
 The soupe their only hawkie does afford, drop cow
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood, partition wall
 The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell, well-saved cheese pungent
 An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
 The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell,
 How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.⁴ twelvemonth

¹ "Where does the quiet and complacent warmth of parental affection smile with a more gentle benignity than in the figure of the mother in the 'Cotter's Saturday Night?'"—PROFESSOR WALKER.

² The germ of this exquisite stanza will be found in the poet's Common-place Book.—"Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young unexperienced mind into, still I think it in a great measure deserves the encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen in the

company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection."—COMMON-PLACE BOOK, *April*, 1783.

³ We fear it is hardly to be called "chief o' Scotia's food" in these days.

⁴ This is a very natural touch. The characteristic method of reckoning employed by those engaged in rural occupations is here well exemplified—a year old since flax was in blossom (say about the end of July). Flax was formerly a somewhat important crop in Scotland though it is now hardly to be seen there.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-Bible,¹ ance his father's pride:
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care;
 And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
 Perhaps *Dundee's*² wild warbling measures rise,
 Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;
 Or noble *Elgin* beets the heav'nward flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
 Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
 The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.³

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,⁴
 How Abram was the friend of God on high;
 Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
 Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
 Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
 Or⁵ rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
 How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
 Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
 How his first followers and servants sped;
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
 How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
 And heard great Bablon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

¹ A large edition of the Bible, such as lay in the hall or principal room of houses.

² *Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin*, the names of psalm-tunes then popular in Scotland.

³ "We do not find fault with Burns for having written these [last three] lines; for association of feeling with feeling, by contrast, is perhaps most of all powerful in music. Believing that there was no devotional spirit in Italian music, it was natural for him to denounce its employment in religious services; but we all know that it cannot without most ignorant violation of the truth be said of the hymns of that

most musical of all people, that 'Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.'"—PROFESSOR WILSON.

⁴ The priest-like father was Burns's own father. Burns had often remarked to his brother Gilbert that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, "Let us worship God," used by a decent sober head of a family introducing family worship; and to this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the "Cotter's Saturday Night." In his letter to Dr. Currie Gilbert Burns says that the "cotter" was an exact copy of his father in his manners, his family-devotion, and exhortations.

fireplace

once

gray side-locks

selects

feeds with fuel

o the room

its kine

shful and hesitating

other people

e."2

wholesome porridge

drop cow

partition wall

avoid cheese pungent

twelvemonth

art, when she repays
fection."—COMMON-

led "chief o' Scotia's

The characteristic
 by those engaged in
 exemplified—a year
 ay about the end of
 somewhat important
 w hardly to be seen

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays:¹
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"²
 That thus they all shall meet in future days:
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear;
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method, and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide,
 Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
 The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stolè;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
 And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to heaven the warm request,
 That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
 Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
 For them and for their little ones provide;
 But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
 That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,³
 "An honest man's the noblest work of God:"
 And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
 What is a lordling's pomp!—a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!⁴

¹ "The affectionate reverence with which William Burnes's children ever regarded him, is attested by all who have described him as he appeared in his domestic circle; but there needs no evidence beside that of the poet himself, who has painted in colours that will never fade, 'the saint, the father, and the husband' of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.'"—LOCKHART.

² See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
 And mounts exulting on triumphant wings.

Pope's "Windsor Forest."

³ Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made.

Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."

⁴ "Our moral nature revolts with a sense of injustice from the comparison of the wickedness of one class with the goodness of another; and the effect is the very opposite of that intended, the rising up of a miserable conviction, that for a while had been laid asleep, that vice and crime are not excluded from cots, but often, alas! are found there in their darkest colours and most portentous forms."—PROF. WILSON.

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O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
 For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent!
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
 Be bless'd with health, and peace, and sweet content!
 And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;¹
 Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
 (The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
 O never, never, Scotia's realm desert:
 But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!²

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

Gilbert Burns gives the winter of 1784 as the date of the composition of this poem, but that his memory had deceived him may be proved by a letter of the poet's to John Richmond, then in Edinburgh, dated Feb. 17th, 1786, in which he says, "I have been very busy with the muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, 'The Ordination,' a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; 'Scotch Drink,' a poem; 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' and 'An Address to the Deil,' &c."—Richmond went to Edinburgh for the purpose of completing his legal studies in the latter part of the preceding year.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned powers,
 That led th' embattled seraphim to war.—MILTON.

O thou! whatever title suit thee,
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,³
 Wha in yon cavern grim an' sooty,
 Clos'd under hatches,

¹That stream'd thro' great, unhappy Wallace' heart—
 was the reading in the Kilmarnock edition, and also
 in the first Edinburgh edition; but at the urgent
 request of Mrs. Dunlop altered, as given in our text,
 in 1793.

²"'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is a noble and
 pathetic picture of human manners, mingled with a
 fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a
 slow and solemn strain of music. The soul of the
 poet aspires from this scene of low-thoughted care,
 and reposes on 'the bosom of its Father and its
 God.'"—HAZLITT.

"'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is, perhaps, of all
 Burns's pieces the one whose exclusion from the col-
 lection, were such things possible nowadays, would
 be the most injurious, if not to the genius, at least

to the character of the man. In spite of many feeble
 lines, and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me, that
 even his genius would suffer more in estimation by
 being contemplated in the absence of this poem than
 of any other single performance he has left us. Loftier
 flights he certainly has made, but in these he re-
 mained but a short while on the wing, and effort is
 too often perceptible; here the motion is easy, gentle,
 placidly undulating. There is more of the conscious
 security of power than in any other of his serious
 pieces of considerable length; the whole has the ap-
 pearance of coming in a full stream from the fountain
 of the heart—a stream that soothes the ear, and has
 no glare on the surface."—LOCKHART.

³The reference is to the *cloots*, or hoofs, with which
 the popular imagination invested Satan.

Spairges about the brunstane cootie, sprinkles brimstone tub
To scaud poor wretches! scald

Hear me, auld Hangie,¹ for a wee, a little
An' let poor damnèd bodies be; bodies = creature;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me, beat and scald
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd and noted is thy name; known
An' tho' yon lowin' heugh's thy hame, flaming pit
 Thou travels far;
An', faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor bate nor scaur. bashful frightened

Whyles, ranging like a roarin' lion, sometimes
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin';
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin'
 Tirling the kirks; unroofing
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld-ruin'd castles, gray,
 Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
 Wi' eldritch croon. unearthly moan

When twilight did my grannie summon
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman! serious
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin', beyond the fence
 Wi' eerie drone; [humming
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortrees comin', elder-trees
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentiu' light,
Wi' you, mysel', I gat a fright, one
 Ayont the lough; slanting
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight, beyond the pond
 Wi' waving sugh. rush-bush
 hollow sound

The cudgel in my nieve did shake, fist
Each brist'd hair stood like a stake,

¹ Elsewhere Burns addresses him as

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation.

When wi' an eldritch, stour "quaick, quaick" hoarse
 Among the springs,
 Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake, fluttered
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
 Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
 They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed;
 And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
 Owre howkit dead over dug-up

Thence countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
 For, O! the yellow treasure's taen
 By witching skill;
 An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie's gaen petted twelve-pint cow
 As yell's the bill. milkless bull

[A stanza omitted.]

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
 An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
 Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
 By your direction,
 An' 'nighted trav'lers are allur'd
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
 The bleezin', curst, mischievous monkies
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 must
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest brother ye wad whip
 would
 Aff straught to h-ll!

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
 garden
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird
 sward
 In shady bower:¹

¹ This verse originally stood:—

Langsyne in Eden's happy scene,
 When strappin' Adam's days were green,
 And Eve was like my bonnie Jean,
 My dearest part,
 A dancin', sweet, young, handsome quean,
 Wi' guileless heart.

brimstone tub
 scald

little
 dies = creature

at and scald

rown
 uring pit

shful frightened

metimes

roofing

nearthly moan

erious
 beyond the fence
 [humming
 ilder-trees

ne
 danting

beyond the pond
 rush-bush
 hollow sound

list

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Then you, ye auld, sneek-drawing dog! ¹ | latch-drawing |
| Ye came to Paradise incog, | |
| An' play'd on man a cursed brogue, | trick |
| (Black be your fa'!) | |
| An' gied the infant warld a shog, | rough shake |
| 'Maist ruin'd a'. ² | almost |
| D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz, | remember bustle |
| Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz, | smoked clothes singed wig |
| Ye did present your smoutie phiz | blackened |
| 'Mang better folk, | |
| An' sklented on the man of Uz | cast obliquely |
| Your spitefu' joke? | |
| An' how ye gat him i' your thrall, | |
| An' brak him out o' house an' hal', | holding |
| While scabs an' botches did him gall, | |
| Wi' bitter claw, | |
| An' lows'd his ill-tongued, wicked scawl, | let loose scolding wife |
| Was warst ava? | worst of all |
| But a' your doings to rehearse, | |
| Your wily snares an' fechtin' fierce, | fighting |
| Sin' that day Michael ³ did you pierce, | |
| Down to this time, | |
| Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse, | would overtask Lowland |
| In prose or rhyme. | |
| An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin' | |
| A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin', | |
| Some luckless hour will send him linkin' | tripping |
| To your black pit; | |
| But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin', | dodging |
| An' cheat you yet. | |
| But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben! | |
| O wad ye tak a thought an' men'! | would |
| Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken— | perhaps |
| Still hae a stake— | |
| I'm wae to think upo' yon den, | sorry |
| Ev'n for your sake! ⁴ | |

¹ Like a burglar, withdrawing the *sneek* or latch stealthily, so as not to be heard, and so getting into Paradise incog., i. e. his proper character not being discovered.

² "There are many touches of simple tenderness of delineation in most of the popular and beautiful poems in the collection, especially in the 'Winter Night'—'The Address to his old Mare'—'The Address to the Deil,' &c.; in all of which, though the greater part of the piece be merely ludicrous and picturesque, there are traits of a delicate and tender

feeling, indicating that unaffected softness of heart which is always so enchanting. In the humorous 'Address to the Deil,' which we have just mentioned, every Scottish reader must have felt the effect of this relenting nature in the stanzas, beginning 'Lang syne in Eden's bonnie yard'—'Then you, ye auld sneek-drawing dog,' and 'But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben.'—JEFFREY.

³ See Milton, book vi.]—R. B.

⁴ "Burns indeed lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being; nothing that has

exister
he can
know
him.
Stop;
sorry f
love w
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did ki
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the ge
or un
letters
and ad
letter
three
"hoso

SCOTCH DRINK.¹

Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief an' care;
There let him bowse, an' deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flow'ing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more.

SOLOMON'S PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

Let other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines an' wines, an' drucken Bacchus,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scotch bere can mak us,
In glass or jug.

drunken
torment
ear
barley

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch Drink!
Whether thro' wimplin' worms thou jink,²
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

steal (or dodge)
cream
foam

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
An' aits set up their awnie horn,
An' pease and beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

holms
cats

commend me to thee

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!³
Or tumblin' in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef:⁴

chews cud
flexible cakes choice

But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,⁵
There thou shines chief.

existence can be indifferent to him. The very devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy! He did not know probably that Sterne had been beforehand with him. 'He is the father of curses and lies,' said Dr. Stoop; 'and is cursed and damned already.' 'I am sorry for it,' quoth my uncle Toby! A poet without love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.'—CARLYLE.—It is tolerably certain that Burns did know that Sterne "had been beforehand with him," and that the sentiment so characteristic of the gentle and humane uncle Toby was consciously or unconsciously borrowed by Burns. The poet's letters clearly enough evidence his familiarity with and admiration of Sterne, and in his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore he expressly says that two or three years before this time *Tristram Shandy* was a "bosom favourite" with him.

¹ "Notwithstanding the praise he has bestowed on 'Scotch Drink'—which seems to have misled his historians—I do not recollect during these seven years [the Tarbolton period], nor till towards the end of his commencing author—when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company—to have ever seen him intoxicated, nor was he at all given to drinking."—GILBERT BURNS TO DR. CURRIE.

² Alluding to whisky, which has to come through the spirally-coiled worm of the still.

³ The poet here alludes to cakes made of barley-meal, which are baked so thin as to be quite flexible.

⁴ In Scotland, hulled barley is uniformly used along with kail or colewort in making broth or soup.

⁵ That is, when brewed or distilled.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
 Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
 When heavy-dragg'd¹ wi' pine an' grievin';
 But, oil'd by thee,
 The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin';
 Wi' rattlin' glee.

belly

pain

gliding swiftly

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
 Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
 Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair
 At's weary toil;
 Thou even brightens dark Despair
 Wi' gloomy smile.

stupefied learning

sore

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,
 Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;²
 Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
 The poor man's wine,
 His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
 Thou kitchens fine.³

silver

drop porridge
gives relish to

Thou art the life o' public haunts:
 But thee, what were our fairs and rants!
 Even godly meetings o' the saunts,
 By thee inspir'd,
 When gaping they besiege the tents,⁴
 Are doubly fir'd.

without thee revels
saints

That merry night we get the corn in,⁵
 O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
 Or reekin' on a New-year mornin'
 In cog or bicker,
 An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn⁶ in,
 An' gusty sucker!

creams

wooden drinking vessels

toothsome sugar

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
 An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
 O rare! to see thee fizz an' freath
 I' th' luggit caup!
 Then Burnewin⁷ comes on like death
 At every chaup.

implements

froth

eared bowl

blow

¹ That is, when pain and grief form a heavy drag upon the wheels.

² Ale in silver jugs at the tables of the rich.

³ When milk is scarce, small beer or other malt liquor is often used as a substitute for it in taking porridge or eating bread. The word *kitchen* in Scotland often means what gives a relish to the commonest fare.

⁴ The movable pulpits at celebrations of the communion. See note to the "Holy Fair."

⁵ Referring to the harvest-home, when the last of the corn-crop is brought home.

⁶ A small quantity of whisky burnt in a spoon, and mixed with the ale.

⁷ *Burnewin*—*burn-the-wind*—the Blacksmith—an appropriate title.—CURRIE.

When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
 Are my poor verses!
 Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks
 At ither's a—s!

Thee, Ferintosh!¹ O sadly lost!
 Scotland, lamept frae coast to coast! from
 Now colic grips an' barkin' hoast cough
 May kill us a';
 For royal Forbes' charter'd hoast
 Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise, those
 Wha mak the whisky stells their prize!
 Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice! hold
 There, seize the blinkers!
 An' bake them up in brunstane pies brimstone
 For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
 Hale breeks, a scone, and whisky gill, whole breeches cake
 An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will, abundance
 Tak a' the rest,
 An' deal't about as thy blind skill
 Directs thee best.²

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS
 AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR [1786]³

A guid New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
 Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie: handful of corn in the stalk bag (stomach)
 Tho' thou's howe-backit now, an' knaggie, hollow-backed with bones protruding.
 I've seen the day,
 Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie stag
 Out-owre the lay. away over lea

¹ Forbes of Culloden had the privilege of distilling whisky, *free of duty*, on his barony of Ferintosh in Cromarty, for public services done by the family. So much whisky was there distilled that Ferintosh became a name almost synonymous with whisky. By the act relating to Scotch distilleries in 1785, the privilege was abolished, but Mr. Forbes received in compensation, by a decision of a jury, the sum of £21,580.

² "Of his pieces of humour, the tale of 'Tamo' Shanter' is probably the best: though there are traits of infinite merit in 'Scotch Drink,' 'The Holy Fair,' 'Hallow-eeen,' and several of the songs, in all of which it is remarkable that he rises occasionally into a strain of

beautiful description or lofty sentiment, far above the pitch of his original conception."—JEFFREY. "Scotch Drink" seems to have been suggested by Fergusson's "Cauler (that is fresh and cool) Water," and it is in the same measure.

³ "It was the token of a true knight in chivalry to be kind to his charger; the Kyle farmer shares in the same feeling, for he is gentle both in word and deed to his 'Auld Mare.' He recollects when she bore him triumphantly home when mellow from markets and other meetings; how she ploughed the stiffest land, and faced the steepest brae, and, moreover, brought home his bonnie bride."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
 An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
 I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,
 A bonnie gray;
 He should been t'ight that daur't to raize thee,
 Ance in a day.

dull
 shining
 excite
 Once on a time

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
 A filly buirdly, steeve, and swank,
 An' set weel down a shapely shank,
 As e'er tread yird;
 An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
 Like ony bird.

large-sized strong active
 earth
 ditch

It's now some nine an' twenty year,
 Sin' thou was my guid-father's mere;
 He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
 An' fifty mark;
 Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
 An' thou was stark.

father-in-law's mare
 dowry
 wealth
 strong

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
 Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:
 Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
 Ye ne'er was donsie;
 But hamely, tawie,¹ quiet, an' cannie,
 An' unco sonsie.

mother
 restive
 manageable steady
 singularly engaging

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
 When ye bure hame my bonnie bride;
 An' sweet, an' gracefu' she did ride,
 Wi' maiden air!
 Kyle Stewart² I could braggèd wide,
 For sic a pair.

bore
 challenged
 such

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte an' hobble,
 An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
 That day ye was a jinker noble,
 For heels an' win'!
 An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
 Far, far behin'.

can but amble crazily
 reel salmon-boat
 active beast
 stagger

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
 An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
 How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh
 An' tak the road!
 Town's-bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
 An' ca't thee mad.

high-mettled
 lingering
 neigh
 townsfolk aloof

¹ That allows itself peaceably to be handled, *spoken of a horse, cow, &c.*—Burns's Glossary.

² The district in Ayrshire situated between the Ayr and the Doon. See note 3, p. 89.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a': ¹ | plough (team) offspring |
| Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw: | |
| Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa, | besides six more |
| That thou hast nurst: | |
| They drew me thretteen pund an' twa, | thirteen pounds |
| The vera warst. | |
| Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought; | sore day's work |
| An' wi' the weary warl' fought! | |
| An' monie an anxious day, I thought | |
| We wad be beat! | |
| Yet here to crazy age we're brought, | |
| Wi' something yet. | |
| And think na, my auld trusty servan', | |
| That now perhaps thou's less deservin' | |
| An' thy auld days may end in starvin', | |
| For my last fou, | measure |
| A heapit stimpert, I'll reserve ane | gallon measure |
| Laid by for you. | |
| We've worn to crazy years thegither; | together |
| We'll toyte about wi' ane anither; | totter |
| Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether, | thoughtful shift |
| To some hain'd rig, | reserved ridge |
| Whare ye may nobly rax your leather, | stretch |
| Wi' sma' fatigue. ² | |

THE TWA DOGS.—A TALE.

The "Twa Dogs" was completed in February, 1786, as appears from a letter of Burns to Richmond, dated the 17th of that month, in which he says: "I have likewise completed my poem on the 'Dogs,' but have not shown it to the world." His brother gives us the following information: "The tale of 'Twa Dogs' was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had a dog, which he called Luath, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow on his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book [the first edition of his poems] under the title of *Stanzas to the Memory of a Quadruped Friend*; but this plan was given up for the poem as it now stands. Cesar was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding a chat with his favourite Luath."—GILBERT BURNS.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,³
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,

¹ My plough-team now consists entirely of thy offspring. *Bairn-time* is the same as Old English *barn-teme*, A. Saxon *bearn-téam*, from *bearn*, child, and *téam*, family, progeny.

² "Towards the close of his Address he grows serious,

but not sad—as well he may; and at the close, as well he may, tender and grateful. . . . The Address has—we know—humanized the heart of a Gilmerton carter."—PROFESSOR WILSON.

³ Kyle, the central district of Ayrshire, popularly

Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

busy
met together

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.

ears
whelped

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;¹
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient² a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gypsy's messin.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

fine
deuce
would have
tinker mongrel cur
smithy
matted cur ragged
would have stood

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,³
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

other
rollicking fellow

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt⁴ face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

sagacious
leaped a ditch or solid fence
comely striped
always got every
shaggy

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit,
Whyles mice an' moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa' in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;

large
hips
fond of each other
extremely intimate
sometimes smelt
moles dug up
each other

supposed to have derived its name from Collus, said in legend to have been a king of the Picts. The portion of Kyle north of the Ayr is distinguished as King's Kyle, or Kyle Stewart, having been at one time in the possession of that family.

¹ "The burlesque panegyric of the first dog reminds one of Launce's account of his dog Crab, where he is

said, as an instance of his being in the way of promotion, 'to have got among three or four gentleman-like dogs under the duke's table.'"—HAZLITT.

² Corruption of *fend*: therefore, a petty oath = the devil a pride.

³ Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.—R. B.

⁴ Having a white stripe down the face.

Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.¹

sporting
knoll

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

at all

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,
His coals, his kain,² and a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel';
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

proprietor
rent in kind assessments

calls for

meshes (lit. stitches)
golden guinea peeps

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry first are stechin',
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and siclike trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,³
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it's past my comprehension.

cramping
kitchen-people belly
suchlike stuff

wonder

cottars put stomach

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't enough;
A cottar howkin' in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like,
Himsel', a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.⁴

In truth sometimes
digging in a ditch [perplexed
building a fence
such

swarm of ragged children
day's labour
thatch and rope

¹ "In one of his earlier poems his plan seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by showing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves; and this he chooses to execute in the form of a dialogue between two dogs. . . . The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talents for moralizing, are downright dogs; and not like the horses of Swift, or the hind and

panther of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes."—DR. CURRIE.

² Fowls, &c., paid as rent by a farmer.—BURNS.

³ *Wonner* or *wonder* is often used in Scotland as a term of great contempt for a small and insignificant person.

⁴ In a comfortable home, the thatch properly secured with straw-rope.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger:
 But, how it comes, I never kent yet,
 They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
 An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

sore
 almost would
 must
 knew
 mostly
 stalwart fellows young women
 such

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
 How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit
 L—d, man, our gentry care as little
 For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
 They gang as saucy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a stinking brock.

such

I've notic'd on our laird's court-day,
 An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 How they maun thole a factor's snash;
 He'll stamp, an' threaten, curse an' swear,
 He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
 While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
 An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!¹

badger
 landlord's rent-day
 woeful
 must endure abuse
 distraint goods
 must stand

I see how folk live that hae riches;
 But surely^{*} poor folk maun be wretches?

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's ane wad think:
 Tho' constantly on poortith's brink,
 They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

one would
 poverty's

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
 They're aye in less or mair provided,
 An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
 A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

short period

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
 Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives,
 The prattling things are just their pride,
 That sweetens a' their fire-side.

thriving children

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy²
 Can mak' the bodies unco happy;

sometimes ale
 uncommonly

¹ This description is from dire personal experience.
 "My indignation yet boils at the recollection of
 (what we suffered at Mount Oliphant, from) the
 scoundrel factor's insolent letters, which used to

set us all in tears."—BURNS'S *Autobiographical Letter*
 to Dr. Moore.

² Twalpennies Scots is equal to one penny sterling
 —the then price of a choppin (quart) of Scotch ale.

They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

marvel

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

rollicking harvest-homes

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin' pipe, an' sneeshin-mill,
Are handed round wi' richt guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.¹

cream

smoking snuff-box

cheerful talking gleefully

frolicking

pleased

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd;
There's monie a creditable stock,
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel' the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a-parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

seemly

torn

perhaps, busy

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it!
Say rather, gaun as premiers lead him,
An' saying ay or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak' a whirl,
To learn bon ton, an' see the worl'.

Faith know

going

foolish

trip

¹ "He carries us into the humble scenes of life, not to make us dole out our tribute of charitable compassion to paupers and cottagers, but to make us feel with them on equal terms, to make us enter into

their passions and interests, and share our hearts with them as with brothers and sisters of the human species."—THOMAS CAMPBELL.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
 He rives his father's auld entails;
 Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
 To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowt;¹
 Or down Italian vista startles,
 Wh-re-hunting among groves o' myrtles:
 Then bowses drumly German water,
 To mak' himsel' look fair and fatter,
 An' clear the consequential sorrows,
 Love-gifts of carnival signoras.

tears

fight cattle

turbid

For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
 Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear Sirs! is that the gate
 They waste sae mony a braw estate!
 Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
 For gear to gang that gate at last!

way

fine

troubled

money way

O would they stay aback frae courts,
 An' please themsels wi' kintra sports,
 It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
 The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter!
 For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
 Fient haet² o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
 Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
 Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
 Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
 The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.³

away from

country

those rollicking fellows

deuce a bit

timmer

wench

grouse

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
 Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
 Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
 The vera thought o't need na fear them.

annoy (stir)

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
 The gentles ye wad ne'er envý 'em.

sometimes

It's true they need na starve or sweat,
 Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
 They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
 An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes;

no hard work

groans

¹ An allusion to the bull-fights of Spain.

² *Fient haet* here, and *deil haet* some lines farther on, are petty oaths expressing negation, and exactly equivalent to the English *deuce* or *devil a bit*.

³ "When describing with satirical humour the character of country squires, he remarks that they are in general disposed to treat their rustic dependants with

affable liberality and indulgence, and that there are but a few unpardonable offences which never fail to kindle their resentment, and call forth their powers of oppression. These he catches with penetrating observation, and enumerates with happy brevity, in six lines, of which the descriptive truth will be recognized from Caithness to Cornwall."—PROFESSOR WALKER.

But human bodies are sic fools,
 For a' their colleges and schools,
 That when nae real ills perplex them,
 They make enow themselves to vex them;
 An' aye the less they hae to sturt them,
 In like proportion less will hurt them.

creatures such

molest

A country fellow at the pleugh,
 His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;
 A country girl at her wheel,
 Her dizzens done, she's unco weel:
 But gentlemen, an' ladies warst,
 Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.
 They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
 Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
 Their days, insipid, dull, and tasteless;
 Their nights unquiet, lang and restless.

dozensⁱⁿ very well

downright

deuce a thing

An' e'en their sports, their balls an' races,
 Their galloping thro' public places,
 There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
 The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

such

The men cast out in party matches,
 Then sowther a' in deep debauches;
 Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' wh-ring,
 Niest day their life is past enduring.

quarrel

solder

one

next

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
 As great and gracious a' as sisters;
 But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
 They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.¹
 Whyles o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,
 They sip the scandal potion pretty;
 Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
 Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
 Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
 An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

each other

together

sometimes

live-long looks

books

There's some exception, man an' woman;
 But this is gentry's life in common.

By this the sun was out o' sight,
 An' darker gloaming brought the night:

¹ All regular devils and jades together.

—They are the happiest who dissemble best
 Their weariness, and they the most polite
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
 Even at their own destruction. She that asks
 Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
 And hates their coming. They—what can they less?—
 Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug,
 With bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.—COWPER.

The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
 The kye stood rowtin' i' the loan;
 When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
 Rejoic'd they were na *men*, but *dogs*;
 An' each took aff his several way,
 Resolv'd to meet some ither day.¹

beetle
 kine lowing lane
 got ears

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER TO THE SCOTCH
 REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

This was written before the act anent the Scotch distilleries, of session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.—BURNS.

Dearest of distillation! last and best!
 . . . How art thou lost! PARODY ON MILTON.²

Ye Irish lords,³ ye knights an' squires,
 Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
 An' doucely manage our affairs
 In parliament,
 To you a simple Bardie's prayers
 Are humbly sent.

burghs
 soberly

Alas! my roopit muse is hearse!
 Your honours' hearts wi' grief 't wad pierce,
 To see her sittin' on her —
 Low i' the dust,
 An' sciechin' out prosaic verse,
 An' like to brust!

rough-voiced hoarse
 would
 screeching

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
 Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
 E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
 On aquavite;⁴

¹ "Though I am very far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakespeare, yet whoever will read his lighter and more humorous poems, his Dialogue of the Dogs, his Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq., his Epistles to a Young Friend, and to W. Simson, will perceive with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners."—HENRY MACKENZIE.

² The lines parodied (not very happily) are in Paradise Lost, book ix., the words being used by Adam in regard to Eve after she had eaten the forbidden fruit:

O fairest of creation, last and best
 Of all God's works! . . .
 How art thou lost!

³ The Almanacs of the period give the names of several Irish peers among the representatives of the "brughs an' shires" of Scotland, these peers being probably connected by blood or marriage with the great Scotch families who held the patronage of many of the seats in North Britain. It is somewhat anomalous that while "Irish lords" that have not a seat in the House of Peers are eligible for a seat in the House of Commons (for constituencies in Great Britain), the same privilege is not enjoyed by peers of Scotland. This disability Burns probably regarded as a national insult.

⁴ In the end of 1785 there was a great outcry among the distillers of Scotland against the laws to which their industry was subject, and they were supported

An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier Youth,¹
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble.
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye disseemble!

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom? frown
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb! trouble
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom swim
Wi' them wha grant 'em,
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin' votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack; lease
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back, scratch ear shrug
An' hum an' haw,
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack tale
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle; weeping thistle
Her mutchkin-stoup as toom's a whistle; pint-pot empty
An' damn'd excisemen in a bustle,
Seizin' a stell, still
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell. limpet

Then on the tither hand present her, other
A blackguard smuggler right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintar, check-by-jowl
Colleaguin join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves, knocked
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

by the farmers and land-owners, these latter classes resting their case chiefly on the fact that the excise laws injuriously affected the sale of barley by reducing its price. It was alleged that many distillers were, in consequence of the existing laws or the excessively rigorous manner in which they were carried out, forced to give up their business; while illicit distillation and smuggling of spirits from abroad

were greatly on the increase, and had come to a pitch never known before. The agitation led to new excise regulations being introduced in 1786 (as Burns intimates in his note given above) which seem to have been considered quite satisfactory by the persons chiefly concerned.

¹ Mr. Pitt. Though only about twenty-seven years of age he was then premier.

If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,¹ windows
 Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
 I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch, oath
 He needna fear their foul reproach
 Nor erudition,
 Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch, confusedly mixed
 The Coalition.²

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
 She's just a devil wi' a rung;
 An' if she promise auld or young
 To tak their part,
 Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
 She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,³
 May still your mither's heart support ye;
 Then, tho' a minister grow dorty, saucy
 An' kick your place,
 Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
 Before his face.

God bless your honours a' your days,
 Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise, drops of broth rags of clothes
 In spite o' a' the thievish kaes, jackdaws
 That haunt St. Jamie's!⁴
 Your humble Bardie sings an' prays
 While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies,
 See future wines, rich clust'ring rise;
 Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
 But, blythe and frisky,
 She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
 Tak aff their whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
 While fragrance blooms and beauty charms,

ear, but breaking it to the hope. . . . It is remembered, however, that Nanse never could understand how the poet should have talked of enjoying himself in her house 'nine times a week.' 'The lad,' she said, 'hardly ever drank three half-mutchkins in her house in his life.' Nanse, probably, had never heard of the poetical license."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

Nanse, in speaking thus, was perhaps only supporting the character here given her, of a discreet ale-wife and no "tale-teller."

¹ Alluding to a reduction of the duty on tea, and a tax on windows, introduced by Pitt in 1784.

² The short-lived coalition ministry under the Duke of Portland, in which it was attempted to effect the Utopian scheme of combining the leading men of both parties—materials the most discordant—into one vigorous and united administration.

³ The number of Scottish representatives in the House of Commons previous to the passing of the Reform Act of 1832.

⁴ The court of St. James's,

When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
 The scented groves,
 Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
 In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouter;
 They downa bide the stink o' powther;
 Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
 To stan' or rin,
 Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throw'ther,
 To save their skin.

shoulder
 cannot stand
 uncertainty
 run
 bang!—pell-mell

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
 Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
 Say, such is royal George's will,
 An' there's the foe,
 He has nae thought but how to kill
 Twa at a blow.

from

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
 Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
 Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him:
 An' when he fa's,
 His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
 In faint huzzas.¹

Sages their solemn een may steek,
 An' raise a philosophic reek,
 And physically causes seek,
 In clime and season;
 But tell me whisky's name in Greek,
 I'll tell the reason.

shut
 smoke

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
 Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
 Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
 Ye tine your dam;
 Freedom and whisky gang thegither!
 Tak aff your dram.

tops
 lose
 go together

¹ "There are specimens of such vigour and emphasis scattered through his whole works, as are sure to make themselves and their author remembered; for instance, that noble description of a dying soldier, "Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him."—JEFFREY.

THE ORDINATION.¹

In a letter of the poet's to his intimate friend John Richmond, Edinburgh, dated 17th February, 1786, he says: "I have been very busy with the Muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, the 'Ordination,' a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock."

For sense they little owe to frugal Heaven.—
To please the mob they hide the little given.

| | | |
|---|---------------|---------|
| Kilmarnock wabsters fidge an' claw, | weavers shrug | scratch |
| An' pour your creeshie nations; | greasy | |
| An' ye wha leather rax an' draw, | stretch | |
| Of a' denominations, ² | | |
| Swith! to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a', | off! | |
| An' there tak up your stations: | | |
| Then aff to Begbie's in a raw, ³ | row | |
| An' pour divine libations | | |
| For joy this day. | | |

| | | |
|--|---------------|--|
| Curst Common Sense, that imp o' hell, | | |
| Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder; ⁴ | | |
| But Oliphant aft made her yell, | | |
| An' Russell sair misca'd her; ⁵ | sorely abused | |
| This day Mackinlay taks the flail, | | |
| An' he's the boy will blaud her! | slap | |
| He'll clap a shangan on her tail, | cleft stick | |
| An' set the bairns to daud her | bespatter | |
| Wi' dirt this day. | | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Mak haste an' turn king David owre, | over |
| An' lilt wi' holy clangor; | sing |
| O' double verse come gie us four, | give |
| An' skirl up the Bangor; ⁶ | screech |

¹The "Ordination," as proved by Burns's own statement regarding its composition, must have been written about, or a little before, the beginning of February, 1786, when it became known that the Rev. Mr. Mackinlay was to be ordained minister of the Laigh (that is Low) or parochial Church of Kilmarnock, which took place on the 6th of April, 1786. Mackinlay died so recently as the 10th of February, 1841, having held the church in Kilmarnock about fifty-five years, and survived the poet about forty-five. He belonged to the high Orthodox or Old Light party, in opposition to the Moderates or New Lights, to which Burns attached himself: and as he succeeded a Moderate (the Rev. Mr. Mutrie) the severe irony of the satire may be accounted for. Other poems in which the severely orthodox party are ridiculed by Burns are the "Twa Herds," the "Holy Fair," and the "Kirk's Alarm."

²The inhabitants of Kilmarnock were then chiefly employed in weaving carpets and other goods, and in the preparation of leather.

³A tavern in Kilmarnock, near the Laigh Kirk, kept by a person of this name.

⁴Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend and worthy Mr. Lindsay to the Laigh Kirk.]—R. B.—This ballad, which is mere doggerel, was written by an eccentric shoemaker named Hunter, and is given at p. 144 of the *History of Kilmarnock*, by Archibald M'Kay.

Mr. Lindsay was said to have obtained his appointment through the influence of his wife, Margaret Lauder, who had been housekeeper to the Earl of Glencairn, the patron of the church. Lindsay was a Moderate, or adopted what was then called the Common Sense doctrines. His induction had to be effected by force. He died in 1774, and was succeeded by the Rev. John Mutrie, who died in June, 1785. Mackinlay obtained the presentation to the Low Church from the Earl of Glencairn in the same year, through the influence of Sir W. Cunningham of Auchenskeith, in whose family he had for some time been tutor.

⁵Oliphant and Russell were Kilmarnock ministers of the Old Light party.

⁶A favourite psalm tune.

This day the kirk kicks up a stoure,
 Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
 For Heresy is in her power,
 An' gloriously she'll whang her
 Wi' pith this day.

dust
 no more
 flog

Come, let a proper text be read,
 An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
 How graceless Ham¹ leugh at his dad,
 Which made Canaan a nigger;
 Or Phineas² drove the murdering blade,
 Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour:
 Or Zipporah,³ the scauldin' jade,
 Was like a bluidy tiger
 I' th' inn that day.

laughed
 scolding

There, try his mettle on the creed,
 And bind him down wi' caution,
 That stipend is a carnal weed
 He taks but for the fashion;
 An' gie him o'er the flock, to feed,
 And punish each transgression;
 Especial, rams that cross the breed,
 Gie them sufficient threshin',
 Spare them nae day.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
 And toss thy horns fu' canty;
 Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
 Because thy pasture's scanty;
 For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
 Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
 An' runts o' grace the pick an' wale,
 No gi'en by way o' dainty,
 But ilka day.⁴

merry
 low
 colewort stems choice
 every

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep,
 To think upon our Zion;
 And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
 Like baby-clouts a-dryin':
 Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
 And o'er the thairms be tryin';

hang
 catgut strings

¹ Genesis ix. ver. 22.—R. B.

² Numbers xxv. ver. 8.—R. B.

³ Exodus iv. ver. 25.—R. B.

⁴ "The conceptions of Burns were no less remarkable for their clearness than their strength. This enabled him to sustain all the similes correctly, and

to avoid that incongruity in the progress of the parallel to which less discriminating minds are exposed. We may refer, as examples, to the ludicrous comparisons of Kilmarnock to a cow in the 'Ordination,' and of the life of the 'Unco Guid' to a mill, in the 'Address,' and also to the whole allegorical song 'John Barleycorn.'"—PROFESSOR WALKER.

Oh, rare! to see our elbuck's wheep,
 An' a' like lamb-tails flyin'
 Fu' fast this day!

elbows jerk

Lang Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
 Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin',
 As lately Fenwick,¹ sair forfairn,
 Has proven to its ruin:
 Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
 He saw mischief was brewin';
 And like a godly elect bairn,
 He's-wal'd us out a true ane,
 And sound this day.

iron
threatened
sorely jaded

Now Robertson² harangue nae mair,
 But steek your gab for ever:
 Or try the wick'd town o' Ayr,
 For there they'll think you clever.
 Or, nae reflection on your lear,
 Ye may commence a shaver;
 Or to the Netherton³ repair,
 And turn a carpet-weaver
 Aff-hand this day.

picked

shut your mouth

learning

Mutrie and you were just a match,
 We never had sic twa drones;
 Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
 Just like a winkin' baudrons;
 And aye he catch'd the tither wretch,
 To fry them in his caudrons;
 But now his honour maun detach,
 Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
 Fast, fast this day.

such two

cat
other
cauldrons
must

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
 She's swingein' thro' the city:
 Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
 I vow it's unco pretty;
 There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
 Grunts out some Latin ditty;
 And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
 To mak to Jamie Beattie⁴
 Her²plaint this day.

foes

extremely

going

But there's Morality himsel',
 Embracing all opinions;

¹ A parish in Ayrshire.² The colleague of Mackinlay—a Moderate; died 1798.³ A suburb of Kilmarnock.⁴ Probably James Beattie, LL.D., the poet and philosopher, author of an *Essay on Truth*, as it was supposed he sided with the "Moderates" in church matters.

Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
 Between his twa companions;
 See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
 As ane were peelin' onions!
 Now there—they're packèd aff to hell,
 And banish'd our dominions,
 Henceforth this day.

other
 the flesh under the skin

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
 Come bouse about the porter!
 Morality's demure decoys
 Shall here nae mair find quarter:
 Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys,
 That Heresy can torture;
 They'll gie her on a rape a hoise,
 And cove her measure shorter
 By th' head some day.

no more

rope hoist
 cut

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
 And here's for a conclusion,
 To every New Light mother's son,
 From this time forth, Confusion:
 If mair they deave us with their din,
 Or Patronage intrusion,
 We'll light a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
 We'll rin them aff in fusion
 Like oil, some day.¹

other pint

deafen

match
 run

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.²

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
 Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
 I owe thee much.—BLAIR.

Dear Smith, the sleest, pawkie thief,
 That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
 Ye surely hae some warlock-brief
 Owre human hearts;
 For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
 Against your arts.

sliest, knowing
 robbery
 wizard's spell

prief

¹ "This poem on the clerical settlements at Kil-marnock, blends a good deal of ingenious metaphor with his accustomed humour. Even viewing him as a satirist, the last and humblest light on which he can be regarded as a poet, it may still be said of him,

His style was witty, though it had some gall:
 Something he might have mended—so may all."

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

² James Smith, to whom this epistle is addressed,

and who is therein described as of "scrimpit stature," but of sterling manhood, was originally a shopkeeper in Mauchline. He removed to the banks of the Avon, in the neighbourhood of Linlithgow, where he established a calico-printing establishment. Becoming unfortunate in his speculations, he afterwards went to the West Indies, and found an early grave. He is said to have been of rather rakish habits, as, indeed, is hinted in the "Epitaph" on p. 110. The epistle was written in the spring of 1786.

"The epistle to Smith is, perhaps, the very best of

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
 And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
 Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
 Just gaun to see you;
 And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
 Mair ta'en I'm wi' you.

twinkles above

going

other

That auld, capricious carlin, Nature,
 To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
 She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
 On her first plan,
 And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature,
 She's wrote, the Man.

beldame

defective

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
 My barmie noddle's working prime,
 My fancy yerkit up sublime
 Wi' hasty summon:
 Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
 To hear what's comin'?

yeasty

lashed

Some rhyme, a neebor's name to lash;
 Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
 Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
 An' raise a din;
 For me, an aim I never fash;—
 I rhyme for fun.

neighbour's

gossip

care for

The star that rules my luckless lot,
 Has fated me the russet coat,
 An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;
 But, in requit,
 Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
 O' countra wit.

This while my notion's ta'en a sklent,
 To try my fate in guid black prent;¹
 But still the mair I'm that way bent,
 Something cries, "Hoolie!
 I red you, honest man, tak tent!
 Ye'll shaw your folly.

for some time turn

softly

warn care

show

"There's ither poets, much your better,
 Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
 Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors
 A' future ages;

all these compositions [the epistles]: the singular ease of the verse—the moral dignity of one passage—the wit and humour of a second—the elegance of compliment in a third—and the life which animates the whole, must be felt by the most ordinary mind. The verse "when ance life's day draws near the gloamin,"

was frequent on the lips of Byron during the darkening frown of his own day."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAME.

¹ An allusion to the first edition of his poems, which was passing through the press at the time this epistle was written, and was published in the end of July, 1786.

Now moths deform in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

Then fareweel hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

busily

hollows

I'll wander on with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with the inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

careless

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living, sound and hale;
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care o'er side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted, fairy-land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours, like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin', hirplin', owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

surmounted

age

coughing, limping

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin',
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;
An' fareweel, dear, deluding woman,
The joy of joys!

twilight

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning,
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
 We eye the rose upon the brier,
 Unmindful that the thorn is near,
 Among the leaves;
 And though the puny wound appear,
 Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spot,
 For which they never toiled or swat;
 They drink the sweet, and eat the fat,
 But care or pain;
 And, haply, eye the barren hut
 With high disdain.

sweated
without

With steady aim, some fortune chase;
 Keen hope does every sinew brace;
 Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
 And seize the prey:
 Then cannie, in some cozie place,
 They close the day.

quietly snug

And others, like your humble servan',
 Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin';
 To right or left, eternal swervin',
 They zig-zag on:
 Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin'
 They aften groan.¹

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
 But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
 Is fortune's fickle Luna waning?
 E'en let her gang!
 Beneath what light she has remaining,
 Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
 And kneel, "Ye Powers!" and warm implore,
 "Tho' I should wander Terra o'er,
 In all her climes,
 Grant me but this, I ask no more,
 Aye rowth o' rhymes.

abundance

"Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
 Till icicles hing frae their beards;
 Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
 And maids of honour;
 And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
 Until they sconner.

dripping squires
hang from
showy clothes
ale tinkers
are nauseated

¹"Where can we find a more exhilarating enumeration of the enjoyments of youth, contrasted with their successive extinction as age advances, than in the 'Epistle to James Smith?'"—PROFESSOR WALKER.

"A title, Dempster¹ merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.,
But gie me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,² soup-maigre
Wi' cheerfu' face, do not
As lang's the muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious ee I never throws eye
Behint my lug, or by my nose; ear
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows duck
As weel's I may:
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule, sober
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool, wal.
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces³
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But, gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise no wonder
The harum-scarum, ram-stam boys, thoughtless
The rattlin' squad:
I see you upwards cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

¹ George Dempster of Dunnichen, Forfarshire, M.P., a distinguished parliamentary orator, and an intrepid defender of all Scottish patriotic institutions: died in 1818, aged eighty-two: referred to in the "Author's Cry."

² Water-brose is made by stirring boiling water and oat-meal together so as to form a thickish mess which is eaten with milk. It used to be a very common

dish with the labouring classes of Scotland. Muslin-kail is a broth composed of water, hulled barley, and greens, without meat, and is so named probably from its thinness or want of substance.

³ This line is quoted by Burns himself in his poem of the "Vision:"

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace"
Was strongly marked in her face.

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there— hold
 Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
 Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
 But quat my sang, quit
 Content wi' you to mak a pair,
 Whare'er I gang.¹

 EPITAPH ON A WAG IN MAUCLINE.²

Lament him, Mauchline husbands a',
 He aften did assist ye;
 For had ye staid whole weeks awa',
 Your wives they ne'er had miss'd ye.
 Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
 To school in bands thegither,
 O tread ye lightly on his grass,
 Perhaps he was your father.

 EPITAPH ON JOHN DOVE,³

INNKEEPER, MAUCLINE.

Here lies Johny Pigeon; what was his religion
 Whae'er desires to ken,
 To some other warl' maun follow the carl,
 For here Johny Pigeon had nane.

Strong ale was ablution, small beer persecution,
 A dram was *memento mori*;
 But a full flowing bowl was the saving his soul,
 And Port was celestial glory.

¹ "The bounding sense of enjoyment expressed in this poem is in striking contrast to the sombre tones of "Man was made to Mourn," and the verses "To a Mouse." . . . There was, indeed, at this time a contention going on in Burns's mind, between the sad consideration of his position in life, and those poetical tendencies which might be interpreted as partly the cause of that position being so low. . . . At length we have the final struggle between these two contending principles, and the triumph of the muse, expressed in a poem of the highest strain of eloquence."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

² This "wag" was James Smith, to whom Burns addressed the above poetical epistle. His claims to

distinction, as a village notoriety, might have with propriety been left unsung.

³ The landlord of the "Whiteford Arms," Mauchline, in the main street opposite the parish church, and closely adjoining the house in which Jean Armour's parents resided. It was Burns's "howff" in the days preceding the publication of the Kilmarnock edition of his poems, and the headquarters of a bachelors' club, of which the poet, John Richmond, James Smith, and William Hunter were "the bright particular stars." Its object was to discuss and expiscate village scandals, and its proceedings were assimilated to those of a court of justice. Smith, the "wag" of the preceding epitaph, acted as "fiscal."

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.¹

| | |
|--|---|
| The sun had clos'd the winter day, The curlers quat their roaring play, ² An' hunger'd maukin ta'en her way To kail-yards green, While faithless snaws ilk step betray Whare she has been. | quitted hare cabbage-gardens each |
| The thresher's weary flingin'-tree The lee-lang day had tired me; And when the day had clos'd his ee, Far i' the west, Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie, I gaed to rest. | flail live-long eye within the parlour went |
| There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek, I sat and ey'd the spewing reek, That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeeke, The auld clay biggin; ³ An' heard the restless rattons squeak About the riggin. | fireside smoke cough- smoke building rats roof |
| All in this mottie, misty clime, I backward mus'd on wasted time, How I had spent my youthfu' prime, An' done nae-thing, But stringin' blethers up in rhyme, For fools to sing. | full of notes nonsense |
| Had I to guid advice but harket, I might, by this, hae led a market, Or strutted in a bank an' clarket My cash account: While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarket, Is a' th' amount. | written up ('clerked') -shirted |

¹ *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his "Cath-Loda," vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation.—R. B.

² *Curling*, a winter amusement on the ice, in which contending parties slide large smooth stones of a circular form, with a handle on the upper side, from one mark to another, called the tee. The chief object of the player is to hurl his stone along the ice towards the tee with proper strength and precision; and on the skill displayed by the players in placing their own stones in favourable positions, or in driving rival

stones out of favourable positions, depends the chief interest of the game. Curling is well called a *roaring play* (the "roaring game" indeed is its ordinary colloquial designation), both from the hilarity of the players and the roaring sound of the stones along the ice. It may be looked upon as a sort of game of bowls played on ice instead of a smooth sward of grass.

³ The farmhouse of Mossiel, where the poet was living when he wrote this poem, was not such a hovel as one might suppose from its being here called "an auld clay biggin."

I started, mutt'ring, "Blockhead! coof!" fool
 And heav'd on high my waukit loof, work-hardened palm
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith, oath
 That I, hencefôrth, would be rhyme-proof
 Till my last breath—

When, click! the string the snick did draw; latch
 And, jee! the door gaed to the wa';
 An' by my ingle-lowe I saw, flame of the fire
 Now bleezin' bright, blazing
 A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw, young woman finely dressed
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht; kept silent
 The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
 I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht stared scared prostrated
 In some wild glen;
 When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
 And steppèd ben. into the room

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
 Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
 I took her for some Scottish Muse,
 By that same token;
 An' come to stop those reckless vows,
 Would soon been broken.

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace,"¹
 Was strongly markèd in her face;
 A wildly-witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her;
 Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
 Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
 Till half a leg was scripply seen; barely
 And such a leg! my bonnie Jean²
 Could only peer it;
 Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean, so straight
 Nane else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
 My gazing wonder chiefly drew;

¹ A quotation from himself—from the "Epistle to James Smith," the piece immediately preceding this.

² Kilmarnock (original) edition:—

And such a leg! my Bess, I ween.

In the original MS. the line was as in the text; but while his poems were at the press Burns's irritation

at Jean Armour's conduct in connection with the destruction of the marriage lines he had given her caused him to obliterate her name, and substitute for it that of "the Cynthia of the minute." The indignant feeling having subsided, and Jean being once more in favour, her name was restored in the Edinburgh edition.

Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling threw
 A lustre grand;
 And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
 A well known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
 There, mountains to the skies were tost;
 Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
 With surging foam;
 There, distant shone art's lofty boast,
 The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
 There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
 Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods, stole
 On to the shore;
 And many a lesser torrent scuds,
 With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
 An ancient borough rear'd her head;
 Still, as in Scottish story read,
 She boasts a race,
 To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
 And polish'd grace.¹

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
 Or ruins pendent in the air,
 Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
 I could discern;
 Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
 With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
 To see a race² heroic wheel,
 And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
 In sturdy blows;
 While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
 Their Suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour,³ mark him well!
 Bold Richardton's⁴ heroic swell;

¹The remaining seven stanzas of Duan First were added in the Edinburgh edition, from motives of policy, to please Mrs. Dunlop and other influential Ayrshire patrons. But they formed part of the first draft, together with a good many more, descriptive of the mantle of Coila, which were entirely suppressed by the author. In fact the suppressed stanzas are weak, and conspicuously below the Burns level. Writing to Mrs. Dunlop on 15th January, 1787, in reference to the seven stanzas introduced in the Edinburgh edition,

he says:—"I have not composed anything on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition. When I composed my *Vision* long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which these stanzas are a part as it originally stood."

²The Wallaces.—R. B.

³Sir William Wallace.—R. B.

⁴Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.—R. B.

The chief on Sark¹ who glorious fell,
 In high command;
 And he whom ruthless fates expel
 His native land.

There, where a scepter'd Pictish shade,²
 Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
 I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
 In colours strong;
 Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
 They strode along.³

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,
 Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
 (Fit haunts for friendship or for love)
 In musing mood,
 An aged judge, I saw him rove,
 Dispensing good.⁴

With deep-struck reverential awe
 The learned sire and son⁵ I saw;
 To nature's God and nature's law
 They gave their lore;
 This, all its source and end to draw;
 That, to adore.

¹ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.—R. B.

² Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family-seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial-place is still shown.—R. B.—The mound popularly understood to contain the remains of old King Coil was opened in May, 1837, when it was satisfactorily ascertained to have been a place of sepulture of no ordinary description.—*Paterson's History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*, vol. i. p. 759.

³ The Montgomeries of Coilsfield.

⁴ Barskimming, and its proprietor, Thomas Miller, lord justice clerk, were here in the poet's eye, and the compliment was merited by both. The lands and mansion of Barskimming occupy a more than usually romantic portion of the banks of the Ayr, between the villages of Tarbolton and Mauchline, and must have been much under the notice of Burns when he resided at Lochlea and Mossgiel. The river here steals its way through a long profound chasm in the New Red Sandstone of the district, the sides of which are in many places as perpendicular as walls, but, in every spot where vegetation is possible, clothed with the most luxuriant wood. A bridge stretches from

the one bank to the other, at a dizzy height above the furtive and scarce seen stream, giving access to the mansion, which is situated on a height immediately above. In the precipices beneath the house there are some artificial caves (hence the expression "many a hermit-fancy'd cove"), accessible in the course of the pleasure walks connected with the mansion. Lord Justice Clerk Miller was born in 1717. Entering at the bar in 1742, he rose through a series of offices to that of supreme criminal judge, which he held from 1766 till January, 1788; when he succeeded Sir Robert Dundas as president of the Court of Session, and attained the dignity of a baronet. His life was unexpectedly cut short, in the ensuing September, when he died, after an illness of two days, at his seat of Barskimming; "leaving," says his biographer, Mr. David (afterwards Baron) Hume, "no good man his enemy, and attended with that sincere and extensive regret which only those can hope for who have occupied the like important stations, and acquitted themselves as well."

⁵ Catrine, the seat of Professor Dugald Stewart.—R. B.—Dr. Matthew Stewart, the mathematician and professor in Edinburgh University, and his son Dugald Stewart, the metaphysician and professor in the same university, are here meant. Burns became acquainted with Professor Dugald Stewart in the latter part of 1786 after the publication of the *Kilmarnock* edition of his poems, and was a visitor at the mansion of Catrine, which was three or four miles from Mossgiel. See vol. i. p. 155.

Blackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh

¹ Wall
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R. B.

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W. P. M.

1858

ON THE RIVER, AYR, AT BARSIMING.

Blackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh.

They bind the wild poetic rage
 In energy,
 Or point the inconclusive page
 Full on the eye.

“Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
 Hence Dempster’s¹ zeal-inspired² tongue;
 Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
 His ‘Minstrel lays;’
 Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
 The sceptic’s bays.

“To lower orders are assign’d
 The humbler ranks of human-kind,
 The rustic bard, the lab’ring hind,
 The artisan;
 All choose, as various they’re inclin’d,
 The various man.

“When yellow waves the heavy grain,
 The threat’ning storm some strongly rein;
 Some teach to meliorate the plain
 With tillage-skill;
 And some instruct the shepherd-train,
 Blythe o’er the hill.

“Some hint the lover’s harmless wile;
 Some grace the maiden’s artless smile;
 Some soothe the lab’rer’s weary toil,
 For humble gains.
 And make his cottage-scenes beguile
 His cares and pains.

“Some, bounded to a district-space,
 Explore at large man’s infant race,
 To mark the embryotic trace
 Of rustic bard;
 And careful note each op’ning grace,
 A guide and guard.

“Of these am I—Coila my name;
 And this district as mine I claim,
 Where once the Campbells,³ chiefs of fame,
 Held ruling pow’r:
 I mark’d thy embryo tuneful flame,
 Thy natal hour.

¹George Dempster, of Dunnichen in Forfarshire, highly popular for his patriotic services to his country both as member of parliament and as landed proprietor and agriculturist.

²“Truth-prevailing” in the Kilmarnock edition.

³The Loudon branch of the Campbells, to whom Mossgiel and much of the land in the neighbourhood then belonged.

¹“Of with the poet lift the poet ‘Winter

Till now, o'er all my wide domains
 Thy fame extends.
 And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
 Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show
 To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow;
 Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
 With Shenstone's art;
 Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
 Warm on the heart.

"Yet, all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
 The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
 Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
 His army shade,
 Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows
 Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
 Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
 And trust me, not Potosi's mine,
 Nor king's regard,
 Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
 A rustic bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
 Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
 Preserve the dignity of man,
 With soul erect;
 And trust the Universal Plan
 Will all protect.

"And wear thou this"—she solemn said,
 And bound the holly round my head;
 The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
 Did rustling play;
 And, like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

SONG—HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.¹

TUNE—"The Job of Journey-work."

Altho' my back be at the wa',
 And though he be the fautour;

wrong-doer

¹ There is an old song, the burden of which is, "Here's his health in water." Stenhouse says the song was thrown off by Burns in jocular allusion to his own and Jean Armour's awkward predicament before their marriage. We put it here accordingly, though its date is doubtful.

Altho' my back be at the wa',
Yet here's his health in water!

O! wae gae by his wanton sides,
Sae brawlie he could flatter;
Till for his sake I'm slighted sair,
And dree the kintra clatter.

woe go
finely
sorely
suffer country gossip

But tho' my back be at the wa',
And tho' he be the fautor,
But tho' my back be at the wa',
Yet here's his health in water!

wrong-doer

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.¹

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither;
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin'.—SOLOMON.—Eccles. vii. 16.

always together

winnowed
pieces of chaff

frolicsomeness

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

well-going

clack

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

corps

sober

thoughtless

unlucky

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,

exchange

¹This poem appeared in the Edinburgh edition of 1787, whence it may be concluded that it was written after the publication of the Kilmarnock edition in July, 1786. It springs so directly from the heart, embodies so much dear-bought experience, and enforces charitable construction of the conduct of others with such calmness and good sense,—the outcome of

a full consciousness on the part of the poet of his own weaknesses and shortcomings,—that had it been written before that date it would most probably have been given to the world then. But the thoughts here embodied were familiar to him, and the germ of the poem may be found in his Common-place Book, under date March, 1784.

But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What makes the mighty differ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hiding.

difference

often more rest

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What ragings must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop:
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way;
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It maks an unco lee-way.

bound

both

very great

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking,
 Till, quite transmugrified, they're grown
 Debauchery and Drinking:
 O, would they stay to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences;
 Or your more dreaded hell to state,
 D-mnation of expenses!

metamorphosed

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
 Tied up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
 Suppose a change o' cases;
 A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
 A treacherous inclination—
 But, let me whisper i' your lug,
 Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

ear

perhaps

Then gently scan your brother man,
 Still gentler sister woman;
 Tho' they may gang a kennin'¹ wrang,
 To step aside is human:
 One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving *Why* they do it:
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

little

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
 Decidedly can try us,
 He knows each chord—its various tone
 Each spring—its various bias:

¹ Literally, as much as enables one to *ken* or know.

Then at the balance let's be mute,
 We never can adjust it;
 What's done we partly may compute,
 But know not what's resisted.¹

THE INVENTORY.

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF TAXES.²

Sir, as your mandate did request,
 I send you here a faithfu' list
 O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graith, goods and possessions implements
 To which I'm clear to gie my aith. oath

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
 I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
 As ever drew afore a pettle. plough-staff
 My lan'-afore's³ a guid auld has-been,
 An' wight an' wilfu' a' his days been; strong
 My lan'-ahin's⁴ a weel-gaun fillie, well-going
 That aft has borne me safe frae Killie,⁵ from
 An' your auld burgh mony a time,
 In days when riding was nae crime:—
 But ance, when in my wooing pride,
 I, like a blockhead, boost to ride,
 The wilfu' creature sae I pat to, behoved
 (L—d, pardon a' my sins, and that too!) put
 I play'd my fillie sic a shavie, such a trick
 She's a' bedevil'd with the spavie. spavin
 My fur-ahin's⁶ a wordy beast, worthy
 As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd. hide or rope
 The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
 A d—mn'd red-wud, Kilburnie⁷ blastie!
 Forbye a cowl, o' cowts the wale, stark mad
 As ever ran afore a tail; besides colt pick

¹ "The momentous truth of this passage could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering."—WORDS-WORTH.

² In 1785, in order to liquidate ten millions of unfunded debt, Mr. Pitt passed a new tax act, among the taxed articles specified in it being male and female servants, riding and carriage horses (ten shillings each), stage-coaches, &c. As tax-surveyor for the district, Mr. Aiken, to whom the "Cotter's Saturday

Night" was inscribed, had sent to Burns the usual schedule to be filled up, on receipt of which the poet sent his friend this poetical "Inventory," which is valuable for the information it gives us about the habits and surroundings of the poet at Mossiel.

³ The fore-horse on the left hand in the plough. See note to the "Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation," p. 88.

⁴ The hindmost horse on the left hand.

⁵ Kilmarnock.

⁶ The hindmost horse on the right hand.

⁷ Kilbirnie, in the district of Cunningham, is noted for its horse fairs, considered the largest in the west of Scotland, at one of which the poet had bought "Highland Donald."

Gin he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.—

if

Wheel carriages I hae but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;
Ae auld wheel-barrow, mair for token
Ae leg an' baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.—

mostly

one

shafts

wheel

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for rantin' an' for noise;
A gaudsman¹ ane, a thrasher t'other,
Wee Davock² hauds the nowt in fother.
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
And aften labour them completely:
An' aye on Sundays duly, nightly
I on the Questions³ targe them tightly;
Till, faith, wee Davock's turn'd sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,
He'll screeed you aff Effectual Calling,⁴
As fast as ony in the dwalling.—

regular devils frolic

goadsman

holds cattle fodder

examine them rigidly

sharp

rattle off

I've nane in female servan' station,
(L—d, keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
I hae nae wife, and that my bliss is,
An' ye have laid nae tax on misses;
An' then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the deevils dare na touch me.
Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heav'n sent me ane mair than I wanted,
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,⁵
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonie sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L—d! ye'se get them a' thegither!

plump

if

ye shall

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of license out I'm takin':
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;

puddle trudge

¹ *Gaudsman*, from *goad* = goad, the boy that drives the plough team; so called because when oxen used to be yoked to the plough, the driver carried a goad or prick. As explained elsewhere, the plough in Burns's day was drawn by four horses.

² A pet diminutive form of *David*.

³ The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster divines, on which Scottish youth, especially in the rural dis-

tricts, used to be severely exercised on the Sunday evenings.

⁴ A prominent question and answer in the Shorter Catechism, considered rather difficult to get by heart.

⁵ An illegitimate child of the poet's, by a servant girl of his mother's, Elizabeth Paton. See note to poem commencing, "Thou's welcome, wean," &c., vol. i. p. 221.

My travel a' on foot I'll shank it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.
The kirk an' you may tak you that,
It puts but little in your pat;
So dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

tramp

pot
do not book
look

This list wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
Day an' date as under notit;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, Feb. 22, 1786.

TO JOHN KENNEDY,

DUMFRIES HOUSE.¹

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline corse,
(Lord, man, there's lassies there wad force
A hermit's fancy;
An' down the gate in faith they're worse,
An' mair unchancy.)

market-cross

road
more dangerous

But, as I'm sayin', please step to Dow's,²
And taste sic gear as Johnnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring the news
That ye are there;
An' if we dinna hae a bouse,
I'se ne'er drink mair.

such stuff
lad

do not have
I shall

It's no I like to sit an' swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow;
But gie me just a true good fellow
Wi' right ingine,
An' spunkie ance to mak' us mellow,
An' there we'll shine.

originality
whisky

Now if ye're ane o' warl's folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
And sklent on poverty their joke,
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you nae friendship I will troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

world's

direct

exchange

¹The above lines follow a short note written to Mr. Kennedy (factor or sub-factor to the Earl of Dumfries, Dumfries House, Ayrshire), in reply to a request to be favoured with a perusal of the "Cotter's

Saturday Night." See the note in its place in the General Correspondence.

²John Dove, landlord of the Whitefoord Arms Inn, Mauchline, a favourite haunt of the poet's. See p. 110.

But if, as I'm informèd weel,
 Ye hate as ill's the vera deil
 The flinty heart that canna feel—
 Come, sir, here's to you!
 Hae, there's my haun, I wiss you weel, / hand wish
 An' gude be wi' you.

ROBERT BURNES.

MOSSGIEL, 3d March, 1786.

TO A LOUSE.

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie? where are you going crawl-
 Your impudence protects you sairly: greatly [ing wonder
 I canna say but ye strunt rarely, strut
 Owre gauze and lace;
 Tho', faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
 On sic a place. such

 Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner, wonder
 Detested, shunn'd by saunt and sinner,
 How dare ye set your fit upon her, foot
 Sae fine a lady!
 Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
 On some puir body. go

 Swiðh! in some beggar's haffet squattle; off! side-locks hide
 There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle scramble
 Wi' ither kindred, jumpin' cattle,
 In shoals and nations;
 Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle small-toothed comb
 Your thick plantations.

 Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight, hold
 Below the fatt'rils, snug an' tight; ribbon-ends
 Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
 Till ye've got on it,
 The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
 O' Miss's bonnet!

 My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out, bold
 As plump and gray as ony grozet; gooseberry
 O for some rank, mercurial rozet, rosin
 Or fell, red smeddum, powder
 I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't, such
 Wad dress your droddum! breech

1 A
 Gloss
 2 In
 visite
 ballo
 wore
 Burn
 of ga
 part
 time

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
 You on an auld wife's flannen toy;¹
 Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
 On's wyliecoat;
 But Miss's fine Lunardi!² fie,
 How dare ye do't!

would not
 cap
 perhaps ragged
 flannel vest

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
 An' set your beauties a' abroad!
 Ye little ken what cursèd speed
 The blastie's makin'!
 Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
 Are notice takin'!

abroad
 blasted creature
 those

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
 To see oursels as others see us!
 It wad frae monie a blunder free us
 And foolish notion:
 What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
 And ev'n devotion!³

would from
 leave

TO MR. M'ADAM,

OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.⁴

Sir, o'er a gill I gat your card,
 I trow it made me proud;
 "See wha taks notice o' the bard!"
 I lap and cried fu' loud.

got
 leaped

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
 The senseless, gawky million;
 I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
 I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

above
 praised

'Twas noble, sir; 'twas like yoursel',
 To grant your high protection:
 A great man's smile ye ken fu' well,
 Is aye a blest infection.

¹ A very old fashion of female head-dress.—*Burns's Glossary.*

² In 1785 Vincent Lunardi, the celebrated aeronaut, visited Scotland, and made several ascents in his balloon. In compliment to him the Scottish ladies wore what they called "Lunardi bonnets," to which Burns alludes in the above verse. They were made of gauze, or thin muslin, extended on wire, the upper part representing the balloon, and were for some time universally fashionable.

³ With regard to this closing verse Motherwell has written:—"If poetical merit were to be determined by frequency of quotation, it would stand very high in the scale."

⁴ Burns copied the above epistle into the Glenriddell collection, where he added the note that it was composed extempore in Nansie Tinnock's, Mauchline.—Craigen-Gillan is a large estate in Carrick, the southern district of Ayrshire. In what way Mr. M'Adam had noticed the poet we do not know.

Tho', by his banes wha in a tub bones
 Match'd Macedonian Sandy!¹
 On my ain legs thro' dirt an' dub,
 I independent stand aye.—

And when those legs to guid, warm kail, soup
 Wi' welcome canna bear me;
 A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail, the shelter of a fence young onion
 And barley-scone shall cheer me. barley-cake

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
 O' mony flow'ry simmers!
 And bless your bonnie lasses baith, both
 I'm tald they're loosome kimmers! winsome girls

And God bless young Dunaskin's² laird,
 The blossom of our gentry!
 And may he wear an auld man's beard,
 A credit to his country.

INSCRIBED ON A WORK OF HANNAH MORE'S,

PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY.³

Thou flatt'ring mark of friendship kind,
 Still may thy pages call to mind
 The dear, the beauteous donor;
 Tho' sweetly female ev'ry part,
 Yet such a head, and more—the heart
 Does both the sexes honour:
 She show'd her taste refined and just
 When she selected thee;
 Yet deviating, own I must,
 For sae approving me;
 But kind still, I'll mind still remember
 The *giver* in the gift;
 I'll bless her, an' wiss her wish
 A Friend aboon the lift. above sky

¹Diogenes of Sinope, the celebrated Cynic philosopher. The poet refers to his memorable interview with Alexander the Great (for which probably there is no historical basis). That monarch is said to have visited Diogenes at Corinth, and found him basking in the sun. Surprised at finding him apparently in such extreme poverty, Alexander, addressing him kindly, asked if he could do him any favour. "Yes," replied the philosopher, "stand a little out of my

sunshine!"—"If I were not Alexander," remarked the conqueror as he turned slowly away, "I would wish to be Diogenes!"

²A place in Ayrshire, apparently belonging to Mr. M'Adam.

³Who this lady was has never been discovered. She was a certain Mrs. C., a friend of Robert Aiken's, in a letter to whom, dated 3d April, 1786, the poet transcribes the above lines.

THE HOLY FAIR.

There is some uncertainty about the date when this poem was written; some editors assign it to the year 1785. We assign it to the early part of 1786 on the following grounds:—On the 17th Feb. 1786, Burns wrote to his friend Richmond, in Edinburgh, to send him a copy of Fergusson's poems. A poem in that volume, "Leith Races," seems to have served Burns as a model, or suggestion, for his satire. The Edinburgh bard is accompanied to the gathering by a personage of the fair sex named Mirth, who meets him and introduces herself on a July morning quite in the same way as his Ayrshire brother is met and accompanied to the Holy Fair by Fun, and the measure of the present poem is the same as that of "Leith Races." The poem itself appeared in the Kilmarnock edition, published in July, 1786.

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty Observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying, on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion.—HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walkèd forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin' down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

fresh and cool

glancing

limping furrows

larks

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam' skelpin' up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fu' gay that day.

stared

young women

tripping

mantles

gray

walked a little behind

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes;
Their visage, wither'd, lang, an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes:
The third cam' up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

clothes

sloes

-jump

curtsey

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."

know

| | |
|--|---|
| Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak, An' taks me by the hauns, "Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck Of a' the ten commauns A screed some day. | hands have given the larger portion commandments rent |
| "My name is Fun—your cronie dear, The nearest friend ye hae; An' this is Superstition here, An' that's Hypocrisy. I'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair, ¹ To spend an hour in daffin': Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair, We will get famous laughin' At them this day." | going merriment if wrinkled |
| Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I'll do't: I'll get my Sunday's sark on, An' meet you on the holy spot; Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin'!" Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time, An' soon I made me ready; For roads were clad, frae side to side, Wi' monie a wearie body, In droves that day. | shirt we shall have breakfast from |
| Here, farmers gash, in ridin' graith, Gaed hoddin' by their cotters; There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith, Are springin' owre the gutters. The lasses, skelpin' barefit, thrang, In silks an' scarlets glitter; Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang, An' farls, bak'd wi' butter, Fu' crump that day. | sagacious attire went jogging strapping fellows tripping barefooted large slice cakes crisp |
| When by the plate we set our nose, Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence, A greedy glowr Black Bonnet throws, An' we maun draw our tippence. Then in we go to see the show, On ev'ry side they're gath'rin', Some carrying dails, some chairs an' stools, An' some are busy bleth'rin' Right loud that day. | stare must deal boards chattering |
| Here stands a shed to fend the showers, ² An' screen our countra gentry, | keep off |

¹ Holy Fair is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.—R. B.

² The whole of the proceedings described take place out of doors, as explained below; hence the need for

There, racer Jess¹ an' twa-three wh-res,
Are blinkin' at the entry.

Here sits a raw of tittlin' jauds,
Wi' heaving breast an' bare neck,
An' there a batch o' wabster lads,
Blackguardin' frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

row whispering jades

weaver
from

Here, some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd-up grace-proud faces;
On that, a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

clothes
soiled

sample

busy

O happy is that man, an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Whase ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

whose own
plumpingpalm
unnoticed

Now a' the congregation o'er,
Is silent expectation;
For Moodie² speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.³
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

climbs up to

the devil

own hot home

the shed, and for the boards, chairs, and stools to sit on. The "plate" for the alms of the congregation would probably stand at the entrance of the churchyard with Black Bonnet (a familiar title for one holding the office of elder) in charge.

¹ Racer Jess had the honour of being related by immediate descent to the Pooisie Nansie of the "Jolly Beggars." She was, in short, her daughter, and received her nickname from her pedestrian powers, having sometimes ran long races for wagers. She died at Mauchline in 1813.

² Moodie, minister of Riccarton, who figures also in the "Twa Herds" and the "Kirk's Alarm." See vol. i. p. 231.

³ "When the second edition of his poems was passing through the press Burns was favoured with many critical suggestions and amendments, to one of which only he attended. Blair reading over with him or hearing him recite, (which he delighted at all times in doing,) his 'Holy Fair,' stopped him at this line, which originally stood, 'wi' tidings o' salvation.' Nay, said the doctor, read 'damnation.' Burns improved the wit of the verse, undoubtedly, by adopting the emendation; but he gave another strange specimen of want of tact, when he insisted that Dr. Blair, one of the most scrupulous observers of clerical propriety, should permit him to acknowledge the obligation in a note."—J. G. LOCKHART.

While Common-Sense¹ has ta'en the road,
 An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,²
 Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller,³ niest, the guard relieves, next
 An' orthodoxy raibles, rattles nonsensically
 Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
 An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
 But, faith! the birkie wants a manse, young fellow
 So, cannily he hums them;
 Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
 Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him half-way
 At times that day.

Now butt an' ben, the change-house fills, in kitchen and parlour inn
 Wi' yill-caup commentators; ale-bowl
 Here's crying out for bakes and gills, biscuits
 An' there the pint stowp clatters;
 While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang, busy
 Wi' logic an' wi' scripture,
 They raise a din, that in the end,
 Is like to breed a rupture
 O' wrath that day.⁴

Leeze me on drink!⁵ it gies us mair drink's the thing!
 Than either school or college:
 It kindles wit, it waukens lair, wakens learning
 It pang's us fu' o' knowledge. crams
 Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep, small beer
 Or ony stronger potion,
 It never fails, on drinking deep,
 To kittle up our notion to sharpen our perceptions
 By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
 To mind baith saul an' body, both soul

¹ Some commentators suppose that there is here a local allusion to Dr. Mackenzie, then of Mauchline, who had conducted a controversy under the pseudonym of Common Sense. But the poet seems rather to intend a personification of the class of doctrines then known by this title, also called the New Light doctrines. See notes to the "Ordination," p. 102.

² A street so called, which faces the tent in Mauchline.—R. B.

³ The Rev. Mr. Miller, afterwards minister of Kilmaurs.

⁴ "The devotion of the common people on the usual days of worship is as much to be commended as their conduct at the sacrament is to be censured. It is celebrated but once in a year, when there are in some places three thousand communicants, and as many idle spectators. Of the first, as many as possible

crowd each side of a long table, and the elements are rudely shoven from one to another, and in some places, before the day is at an end, fights and other indecencies ensue. It is often made a season of debauchery."—PENNANT'S *Tour in Scotland*, 1769.

We quote this passage to show that, in depicting the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, accompanied by such scenes as are described in the "Holy Fair," Burns did not so far overstrain probability, as the modern reader is apt to believe. His satiric exposure, on the other hand, had, doubtless, much effect in putting a stop to the abuses connected with these occasions.

⁵ *Leeze me on*, a phrase of congratulatory endearment.—R. B.—"Leeze me on drink," I am happy in drink; pleased am I with drink; or proud I am of drink.

Sit round the table, weel content,
 An' steer about the toddy. stir
 On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk, look
 They're making observations;
 While some are cozie i' the neuk, snug corner
 An' formin' assignations
 To meet some day.

But now the L—d's ain trumpet touts, own
 Till a' the hills are rairin', roaring
 An' echoes back return the shouts:
 Black Russell¹ is na sparin':
 His piercing words, like Highlan' swords,
 Divide the joints an' marrow;
 His talk o' hell, whare devils dwell,
 Our vera sauls does harrow² very souls
 Wi' fright that day.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
 Fill'd fu' o' lowin' brunstane, burning brimstone
 Whase ragin' flame, an' scorchin' heat,
 Wad melt the hardest whun-stane! whinstone
 The half asleep start up wi' fear,
 An' think they hear it roarin',
 When presently it does appear,
 'Twas but some neebor snorin' neighbour
 Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
 How monie stories past,
 An' how they crowded to the yill ale
 When they were a' dismiss;
 How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups, small tubs and wooden bowls
 Among the furms an' benches; forms

¹ The Rev. John Russell, of Kilmarnock, afterwards of Stirling. He was at one time a schoolmaster in Cromarty, and Hugh Miller thus speaks of him: "Some traits of Russell have been preserved. Burns seems to have seized with the felicity of genius the distinctive features of his character. He was a large, robust, dark-complexioned man, imperturbably grave, fierce of temper, and had a stern expression of countenance. . . . He became popular as a preacher: his manner was strong and energetic: the severity of his temper was a sort of genius to him, while he described, as he loved to do, the tortures of the wicked in a future state. . . . A native of Cromarty, who happened at that time to be in the west of Scotland, walked to Mauchline to hear his old schoolmaster preach;—this was about 1792. There was an excellent sermon to be heard from the tent, and excellent drink to be had from a neighbouring ale-house, and between the two, the people seemed much divided. A young

clergyman was preaching, and Russell was nigh him. At every fresh movement of the people, or ungodly burst of sound from the ale-house, the latter would raise himself on tip-toe—look sternly towards the change-house, and then at his younger brother in the pulpit: at last his own turn to preach arrived—he sprang into the tent—closed his Bible—and without psalm or prayer or other preliminary matter, burst out at once in a passionate and eloquent address upon the folly and sin which a portion of the people were committing. The sound in the ale-house ceased—the inmates came out and listened to the denunciation, which some of them remembered with a shudder in after-life. He lived to a great age, and was always a dauntless and intrepid old man."

² Shakespeare's Hamlet.—R. B.

The poet perhaps had in mind the lines—

Looks it not like the King? mark it, Horatio.
 —Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
 Was dealt about in lunches,
 An' dawds that day large pieces

In comes a gaucie gash guidwife,
 An' sits down by the fire, jolly sagacious matron
 Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
 The lasses they are shyèr. then cheese

The auld guidmen about the grace,
 Frae side to side they bother, elderly married men
 Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
 An' gies them't like a tether,
 Fu' lang that day.¹

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass. alast
 Or lasses that hae naething!
 Sma' need has he to say a grace,
 Or melvie his braw claithing! soil with meal

O wives! be mindfu', ance yoursel'
 How bonnie lads ye wanted,
 An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel, ainder piece of a cheese
 Let lasses be affronted
 On sic a day. such

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin' tow,
 Begins to jow an' croon; the bell-ringer rope
 Some swagger hame the best they dow,
 Some wait the afternoon. peal
 At slaps the billies halt a blink, gaps young fellows moment
 Till lasses strip their shoon:² shoes

Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
 They're a' in famous tune,
 For crack that day. chat

How monie hearts this day converts
 O' sinners and o' lasses!
 Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane by night
 As saft as ony flesh is.
 There's some are fu' o' love divine;
 There's some are fu' o' brandy;
 An' monie jobs that day begin,
 May end in houghmagandie
 Some ither day.³

¹ "The farcical scene the poet here describes was often a favourite field for his observation, and the most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes."—GILBERT BURNS.

² Formerly, perhaps in some places even yet, it was common for the "lasses" to walk barefooted ("skelpin' bareft") most of the way to and from church, their shoes being put on and off not far from the building.

³ "The annual celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the rural parishes of Scotland has much in it of those old popish festivals in which superstition, traffic, and amusement are to be found so strangely intermingled. Burns saw and seized in it one of the happiest of all subjects to afford scope for the display of that strong and piercing sagacity by which he could almost intuitively distinguish the

SONG—AGAIN REJOICING NATURE SEES.

TUNE—"Johnny's Gray Breeks.

The gloom that pervades this song points it out as probably a composition of that dreary period (the spring of 1786) to which the pieces immediately following belong. See notes to these.

Again rejoicing nature sees
 Her robe assume its vernal hues,
 Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
 All freshly steep'd in morning dews.
 And maun I still on Menie¹ doat, must
 And bear the scorn that's in her ee? eye
 For it's jet, jet black, an' it's like a hawk,
 Au' it winna let a body be!² will not

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
 In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
 In vain to me, in glen or shaw, wood
 The mavis and the lintwhite sing. linnet
 And maun I still, &c.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
 Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks, attentive
 But life to me 's a weary dream,
 A dream of ane that never wauks. wakes
 And maun I still, &c.

The wanton coot the water skims,
 Among the reeds the ducklings cry,
 The stately swan majestic swims,
 And every thing is blest but I.
 And maun I still, &c.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap, shuts fold-gate
 And owre the moorlands whistles shill, shrill
 Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
 I meet him on the dewy hill.
 And maun I still, &c.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
 Blythe waukens by the daisy's side, wakens
 And mounts and sings on fluttering wings,
 A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide. ghost
 And maun I still, &c.

¹ "Menie is the common abbreviation of Mariamne."
 —R. B.—It is more correctly the popular pet name
 for Marion.

² This chorus, Burns tells us, was "part of a song
 the composition of a gentleman in Edinburgh, a par-
 ticular friend of the author's." The "gentleman" Mr.
 Scott Douglas would identify with the poet himself;

and "Menie" he regards as a transparent substitute
 for "Jeanie," Jean Armour to wit. The poet admits
 his obvious obligations to Gray's "Elegy" in this piece.
 Currie has objected to the chorus, as perpetually in-
 terfering with the sentiment of the song itself; every
 one will probably feel the force of Dr. Currie's objec-
 tion.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
 And raging bend the naked tree;
 Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
 When nature all is sad like me!
 And maun I still, &c.

THE LAMENT.

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
 And sweet affection prove the spring of woe.—HOME.

O thou pale orb, that silent shines,
 While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
 Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
 And wanders here to wail and weep!
 With woe I nightly vigils keep,
 Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
 And mourn, in lamentation deep,
 How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
 The faintly-mark'd distant hill:
 I joyless view thy trembling horn,
 Reflected in the gurgling rill:
 My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
 Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
 Ah! must the agonizing thrill
 For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feign'd poetic pains
 My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
 No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
 No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
 The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
 The oft-attested pow'rs above;
 The promis'd Father's tender name:
 These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
 How have the raptur'd moments flown!
 How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
 For her dear sake, and hers alone!
 And must I think it?—is she gone,
 My secret heart's exulting boast?
 And does she heedless hear my groan?
 And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
 So lost to honour, lost to truth,
 As from the fondest lover part,
 The plighted husband of her youth!
 Alas! life's path may be unsmooth,
 Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
 Then who her pangs and pains will soothe,
 Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wingèd hours that o'er us pass'd,
 Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
 Your dear remembrance in my breast,
 My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
 That breast how dreary now, and void,
 For her too scanty once of room!
 Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
 And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn, that warns th' approaching day,
 Awakes me up to toil and woe:
 I see the hours in long array,
 That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
 Full many a pang, and many a throe,
 Keen recollection's direful train,
 Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
 Shall kiss the distant, western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
 Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
 My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
 Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
 Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
 Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
 Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
 From such a horror-breathing night.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
 Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
 Oft has thy silent-marking glance
 Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
 The time, unheeded, sped away,
 While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
 Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
 To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
 Scenes, never, never, to return!
 Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
 Again I feel, again I burn!

From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
 Life's weary vale I wander thro':
 And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
 A faithless woman's broken vow.¹

TO RUIN.

All hail! inexorable lord!
 At whose destruction-breathing word,
 The mightiest empires fall!
 Thy cruel woe-delighted train,
 The ministers of grief and pain,
 A sullen welcome, all!
 With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
 I see each aimèd dart;
 For one has cut my dearest tie,
 And quivers in my heart.²

¹ This poem, though said to be written on the unfortunate issue of a friend's amour, was in reality the result of the poet's own personal feelings during that most unhappy passage of his life, in the early part of 1786, when Jean Armour was forced by her parents to discard him, and to destroy the private nuptial engagement or marriage agreement that had passed between them. The misery into which this plunged the poet and the pangs which he seems to have suffered from wounded affection and injured pride may be seen from his poems and letters. In his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore he writes:—"The unfortunate story that gave rise to the printed poem, the 'Lament,' was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality." The poem first appeared in the Kilmarnock edition of his works which were passing through the press at this very time, in the midst of his affliction, with the view of raising a small sum of money to carry him to the West Indies. In one of his letters to Mr. David Brice of Glasgow, dated June 12th, 1786, he says:—"I just write to let you know, that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate as your humble servant still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say in the place of hope. . . . Poor ill-advised ungrateful Armour came home [from Paisley] on Friday last. . . . What she thinks of her conduct now, I don't know; one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her; and to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all. . . . May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul

forgive her; and may his grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. . . . And now for a grand cure: the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica: and then, farewell, dear old Scotland! and farewell, dear ungrateful Jean! for never, never will I see you more!" The reader must not suppose, however, that the poet's misery was entirely unbroken. He found consolation in a new love in place of the old; and strange as it may seem, the letter just quoted was written about a month after the poet's farewell meeting with Highland Mary, while the poem above would probably be written some little time before that tender episode. In the letter he represents himself as all the time loving Jean to distraction, though in fact he had already pledged himself to Mary, and had even (in a letter to John Arnot) treated Jean Armour's desertion of him in quite a burlesque vein. See also note to the "Farewell."

² The "dart" that

Cut my dearest tie,
 And quivers in my heart,

is an allusion to Jean Armour's enforced desertion of him, which, though "Hungry Ruin had him in the wind" he felt to be, of all his ills, that which he could least easily bear. See note to preceding poem.

The jingle of the last four lines of each stanza of this poem, and of the ode to "Despondency" which directly follows, is, we think, even were the rhymes absolutely faultless, inappropriate to the sentiments of the pieces. It is admirably adapted, however, to lighter themes, such as form the staple of the first "Epistle to Davie."

Then low'ring, and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

And, thou grim pow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclaspèd, and graspèd
Within thy cold embrace?

DESPONDENCY—AN ODE.

"I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, and loves an embodied form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease."—R. B.

Opress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I set me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wish'd end's denied,
Yet while the busy means are plied,
They bring their own reward:

Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
 Unfitted with an aim,
 Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
 And joyless morn the same;
 You, bustling, and justling,
 Forget each grief and pain;
 I, listless, yet restless,
 Find every prospect vain.

How blest the Solitary's lot,
 Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
 Within his humble cell,
 The cavern wild with tangling roots,
 Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
 Beside his crystal well!¹
 Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
 By unfrequented stream,
 The ways of men are distant brought,
 A faint collected dream:
 While praising, and raising
 His thoughts to heav'n on high,
 As waud'ring, meand'ring,
 He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
 Where never human footstep trac'd,
 Less fit to play the part;
 The lucky moment to improve,
 And just to stop, and just to move,
 With self-respecting art:
 But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
 Which I too keenly taste,
 The Solitary can despise,
 Can want, and yet be blest!
 He needs not, he heeds not,
 Or human love or hate,
 Whilst I here must cry here,
 At perfidy ingrate!

Oh! enviable, early days,
 When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
 To care, to guilt unknown!
 How ill exchang'd for riper times,
 To feel the follies, or the crimes
 Of others, or my own!

¹ Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
 From youth to age a reverend hermit grew;
 The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
 His food the fruit, his drink the crystal well.

Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport
 Like linnets in the bush,
 Ye little know the ills ye court,
 When manhood is your wish!
 The losses, the crosses,
 That active man engage!
 The fears all, the tears all,
 Of dim-declining age!¹

POETICAL REPLY TO AN INVITATION.²

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,
 And faith, I am gay and hearty!
 To tell the truth, an' shame the deil,
 I am as fou as Bartie:³
 But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
 Expect me o' your party,
 If on a beastie I can speel,
 Or hurl in a cartie.—ROBERT BURNS.

Thursday

climb

ride

MAUCHLIN, Monday Night, 10 o'clock.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.,

MAUCHLINE,⁶

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

Mosgaville,⁴ May 3, 1786.

I hold it, sir, my bounden duty
 To warn you how that Master Tootie,
 Alias, Laird M'Gaun,⁵
 Was here to hire yon lad away
 'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
 An' wad hae don't aff han':

other

would at once

¹The darkening views of his lot, expressed in this poem, point with sufficient distinctness to the period of its composition as being that to which the three immediately preceding pieces belong.

²To whom this "Reply" was sent is not known.

³One of the many humorous designations given by the peasantry of Ayrshire to the devil.

⁴The proper appellation, of which Mosgaville is a contraction.

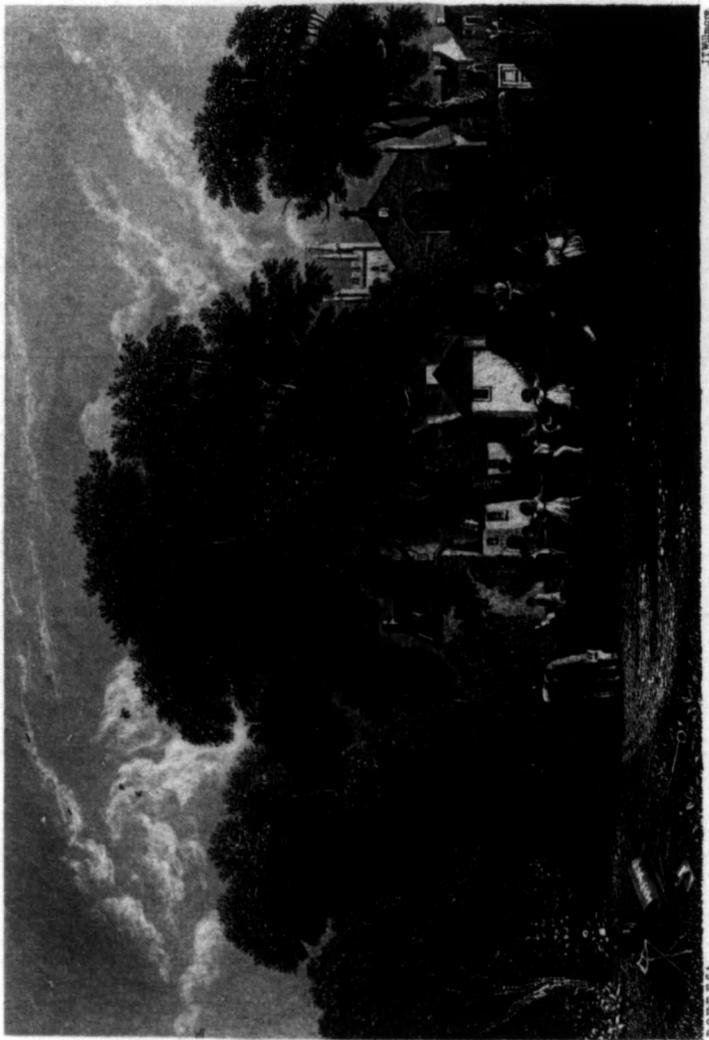
⁵"Master Tootie was a dealer in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age."—CROMEK.

⁶The village of Mauchline is situated nine miles to the south of Kilmarnock, on the road from Glasgow to Dumfries, and is intimately connected with the personal and literary history of Burns. The years of his life between the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth were spent at Mossgiel, a mile from Mauchline,—the years during which he wrote his principal poems, and when, to use the language of Mr. Lockhart, "his character came out in all its brightest lights, and in all but its darkest shadows." As the chief seat of an assembled population in his neighbourhood, this village appropriated a large share of the notice of the

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GAVIN HAMILTON'S HOUSE, MAUCHELLE.

Placate & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh.

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Cowgate.
this lane in
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the castle
Mauchline:
modern.

Mr. Gavi
titioner, of
spirit and i
ened. Unf
square wit

| | |
|---|------------|
| But lest he learn the callan tricks, | boy |
| As, faith, I muckle doubt him, | |
| Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks, | an old cow |
| An' tellin' lies about them; | |
| As lieve, then, I'd have then, | willingly |
| Your clerkship he should sair, | serve |
| If sae be, ye may be | |
| Not fitted oth'erwhere. | |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough, | sharp |
| An' 'bout a house that's rude an' rough, | |
| The boy might learn to swear; | |

poet during this important era. To it he resorted, after labour, for the pleasures of society. There he presided in the debating club, or shone over the bowl. It was the scene of the "Holy Fair," and of the "Jolly Beggars." Here dwelt John Dow or Dove and Nanse Tinnock, both of whom catered for the delectation—perchance also the obfuscation—of the public. His mistress, Jean Armour, was one of the "six proper young belles" of Mauchline whom he celebrates. He proposes to meet Lapraik at "Mauchline race," or "Mauchline fair." Its minister was that Daddie Auld, whom he has characterized so ungenerally; and one of its elders was that Holy Willie into whose mouth he has put so remarkable an exposition of rigid Calvinism. And here was the residence of his friend Gavin Hamilton, whose friendship was unquestionably one of the most important circumstances of his early life.

Mauchline is a neatly-built village situated on a slope, about a mile from the river Ayr. The church which existed in Burns's day was a low ungainly building, since supplanted by a handsome modern Gothic edifice. (See the accompanying plate.) The burial-ground surrounding the old edifice was more particularly the scene of the "Holy Fair." On the right of the church stood a plain, but not uncomfortable inn, denominated the *Whitefoord Arms*. It was a favourite resort of Burns, who, on the back window of one of the upper rooms, scribbled an amusing epitaph on the host, John Dow ("Johnny Pigeon"), in which he made out the religion of that worthy to be a mere comparative appreciation of his various liquors. From the same back window he could converse in the language of the eyes with his Jean, whose father's house was immediately behind, in the lane denominated the Cowgate. The reader will recollect an allusion to this lane in the "Holy Fair." The house of Mr. Gavin Hamilton was in Burns's time the most conspicuous object in the village. The taller part of the edifice (as seen in the plate) was a portion of what was called the castle formerly connected with the Priory of Mauchline: the rest of the house was comparatively modern.

Mr. Gavin Hamilton was a writer, or legal practitioner, of highly respectable character—a man of spirit and intelligence, generous, affable, and enlightened. Unfortunately, his religious practice did not square with the notions of the then minister of

Mauchline, the "Daddie Auld" already alluded to, who, in 1785, is found in the session records to have summoned him for rebuke, on the four following charges:—1. Unnecessary absence from church for five consecutive Sundays (apparently the result of some dispute about a poor's-rate); 2. Setting out on a journey to Carrick on a Sunday; 3. Habitual, if not total neglect of family worship; 4. Writing an abusive letter to the session in reference to some of their former proceedings respecting him. Strange though this prosecution may seem, it was strictly accordant with the right assumed by clergymen at that period to inquire into the private habits of parishioners. It was fortunately, however, mixed up with some personal motives in the members of the session, which were so apparent to the presbytery, to which Mr. Hamilton appealed, that that reverend body ordered the proceedings to be stopped, and all notice of them expunged from the records. Prepossessions of more kinds than one induced Burns to let loose his irreverent muse in satire against the persecutors of Mr. Hamilton; and the result was several poems, in which, as many are inclined to think, religion itself suffers in common with those whom he holds up as abusing it. About two years after, when Burns had commenced the Edinburgh chapter of his life, a new offence was committed by Mr. Hamilton. He had, on a Sunday morning, ordered a servant to take in some potatoes which happened to have been left out in the garden after being dug. This came to the ears of the minister, and Mr. Hamilton was summoned to answer for the offence. Some ludicrous details occur in the session records. It is there alleged that two and a half rows of potatoes were dug on the morning in question, by Mr. Hamilton's express order, and carried home by his daughter: nay, so keen had the spirit of persecution been, that the rows had been formally measured, and found to be each eleven feet long; so that twenty-seven feet and a half altogether had been dug! The presbytery or synod treated this prosecution in the same way as the former, and Burns did not overlook it in his poems. He alludes to it in "Holy Willie's Prayer," when he makes that individual implore a curse upon Mr. Hamilton's

— basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes—

and on several other occasions.

But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
 An' get sic fair example straught,
 I hae na ony fear.
 Ye'll catechize him every quirk,
 An' shore him weel wi' hell;
 An' gar him follow to the kirk——
 —Aye when ye gang yoursel'.
 If ye then, maun be then
 Frae hame this comin' Friday,
 Then please, sir, to lea'e, sir,
 The orders wi' your lady.

such straight

threaten

make

must

from home

My word of honour I hae gi'en,
 In Paisley John's,¹ that night at e'en,
 To meet the world's worm;
 To try to get the twa to gree,
 An' name the airles an' the fee,
 In legal mode an' form:
 I ken he weel a snick can draw,²
 When simple bodies let him;
 An' if a devil be at a',
 In faith, he's sure to get him.
 To phrase you, an' praise you,
 Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
 The prayer still, you share still,
 Of grateful Minstrel Burns.

worldly reptile

agree

earnest money

take fraudulent advantage

persons

SONG—MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

This song, in the words of Burns himself, "was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was at all known in the world. My Highland Lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love." See Burns's statement complete in vol. i. p. 174, where the origin of this and the next song is discussed, the heroine of both being Highland Mary (Mary Campbell).

Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,
 Shall ever be my muse's care;
 Their titles a' are empty show;
 Gie me my Highland Lassie, O.
 Within the glen sae bushy, O,
 Aboon the plain sae rushy, O,
 I sit me down wi' right good will,
 To sing my Highland Lassie, O.
 Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
 Yon palace and yon gardens fine!

high-born

above

¹ John Dow's inn.² Similarly Satan is called a "sneck-drawing dog" in the "Address to the Deil." See note to that poem

(page 82), explaining the term.

¹ This Jamaica,

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
 And the apple on the pine;
 But a' the charms o' the Indies
 Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
 I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
 And sae may the Heavens forget me,
 When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 And plight me your lily-white hand;
 O plight me your faith, my Mary;
 Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
 In mutual affection to join:
 And curst be the cause that shall part us!
 The hour and the moment o' time!

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.¹

May, 1786.

I lang hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
 A something to have sent you,
 Tho' it should serve nae other end
 Than just a kind *memento*;
 But how the subject-theme may gang,
 Let time and chance determine;
 Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
 Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
 And, Andrew dear, believe me,
 Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
 And muckle they may grieve ye:²
 For care and trouble set your thought,
 Ev'n when your end's attained;
 And a' your views may come to nought,
 Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

stränge

¹ This epistle was addressed to Andrew Aiken, son of Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, to whom the "Cotter's Saturday Night" is inscribed. Andrew Aiken was successful in life as a merchant in Liverpool, and afterwards held the appointment of English consul at Riga, where he died in 1831. His son P. F. Aiken published *Memorials of Robert Burns, with Selections of his Poems*, in 1876.—"The epistle displays much shrewdness, an intimate acquaintance with human nature, and great kind-heartedness. When Burns employed his mind in giving rules for moral and prudential conduct, no man was a sounder philosopher."—MOTHERWELL.

¹ Thi
 a degr
 The sp
 sentim
 episod
 secrecy
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² In a
 May 15
 serted

Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Nor for a train-attendant,
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
 To haud the wretch in order;
 But where ye feel your honour grip,
 Let that aye be your border;
 Its slightest touches, instant pause—
 Debar a' side pretences;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.

hold

always

The great Creator to revere
 Must sure become the creature;
 But still the preaching cant forbear,
 And ev'n the rigid feature:
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
 Be complaisance extended;
 An atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
 Religion may be blinded;
 Or if she gie a random sting,
 It may be little minded;
 But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
 A conscience but a canker—
 A correspondence fix'd wi' heav'n,
 Is sure a noble anchor!

revelling

without

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting:
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth
 Erect your brow undaunting!
 In ploughman's phrase, "God send you speed,"
 Still daily to grow wiser;
 And may you better reckon the rede,
 Than ever did th' adviser!¹

advice

¹ William Niven of Kilbride, Maybole, the "Willie" who was Burns's schoolfellow and crony during the short period he attended the school at Kirkoswald, always asserted that this epistle was originally addressed to him, but afterwards transferred to Andrew Aiken from motives of policy.

To the
 Honour
 Garden,
 the soci
 escape f
 lands of
 LIBERTY

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honourable and Honourable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakspeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred Highlanders, who, as the society were informed by Mr. M'Kenzie, of Applecross, were so audacious as to attempt to escape from their lawful lords and masters, whose property they were, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. M'Donald, of Glengarry, to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—
LIBERTY.

Long life, my lord, an' health be yours,
Unscath'd by hunger'd Highland boors;
Lord grant nae duddie desperate beggar,
Wi' dirk, claymore, or rusty trigger,
May twin auld Scotland o' a life
She likes—as lambkins like a knife.

ragged

bereave

Faith, you and Applecross were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight;
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
Than let them ance out owre the water;
Then up among the lakes and seas
They'll mak what rules and laws they please;
Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin';
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them,
Till God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed—
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to Patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North, now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,
An' whare will ye get Howes and Clintons
To bring them to a right repentance,
To cove the rebel generation,
An' save the honour o' the nation?
They, an' be damn'd! what right hae they
To meat or sleep, or light o' day?
Far less to riches, pow'r, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to gie them?

would desire

once (get) across

quell

But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand's owre light on them, I fear!
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna' say but they do gaylies;
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
An' tirl the hallions to the birses;

farm overseers

fairly well

strip clowns hides

26

Yet while they're only poind't and herriet, distrained robbed
 They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit;
 But smash them! crush them a' to spails! chips
 An' rot the dyvors i' the jails! bankrupts
 The young dogs, swinge them to the labour;
 Let wark an' hunger mak them sober!
 The hizzies, if they're aughtlins fawsont, young women anyway
 Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd! [comely
 An' if the wives an' dirty brats
 Come thigging at your doors and yetts, begging gates
 Flaffan wi' duds and gray wi' beas', fluttering vermin
 Frighten awa your deucks an' geese,
 Get out a horse whip or a jowler,
 The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
 And gar the tatter'd gypsies pack make
 Wi' a' their bastards on their back!
 Go on, my lord! I lang to meet you,
 An' in my house at hame to greet you;
 Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle, shall not
 The benmost neuk beside the ingle, innermost corner fireside
 At my right han' assign'd your seat
 "Tween Herod's hip an' Polycrate,—
 Or if you on your station tarrow, murmur
 Between Almagro and Pizarro,
 A seat, I'm sure ye're weel deservin't;
 An' till ye come—Your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.¹

June 1st, Anno Mundi 5790 [A. D. 1786.]

¹The "Address of Beelzebub" was first published in the *Edinburgh Magazine* of Feb. 1818. The person who sent it had got the MS. of it in Burns's handwriting from a friend, who again had got it from the poet's intimate and crony, Rankine, of Adamhill. Burns must have misapprehended the scope of the meeting of the Highland Society he refers to in the dedication or superscription. A notice of it appeared in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of May 30th, 1786:—"On Tuesday [May 23] there was a meeting of the Highland Society at London for the encouragement of the fisheries in the Highlands, &c. Three thousand pounds were immediately subscribed by eleven gentlemen present for this particular purpose. The Earl of Breadalbane informed the meeting that 500 persons had agreed to emigrate from the estates of Mr. M'Donald of Glengarry; that they had subscribed money, purchased ships, &c., to carry their design into effect. The noblemen and gentle-

men agreed to co-operate with government to frustrate their design; and to recommend to the principal noblemen and gentlemen in the Highlands to endeavour to prevent emigration, by improving the fisheries, agriculture, and manufactures, and particularly to enter into a subscription for that purpose." What is the dread of one generation becomes the desire of another. Highland proprietors, instead of subscribing now to prevent the people on their estates from emigrating, would gladly subscribe to assist suitable persons to seek "fresh woods and pastures new" in emigration districts. Mr. M'Kenzie of Applecross, in Ross-shire, who is here reprehended along with the Earl of Breadalbane, was in his time regarded, and is still remembered, as a liberal-minded and excellent landlord, so anxious for the welfare of his tenantry that he spontaneously relinquished his feudal claims upon their labour.

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 friends :-
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 bardship
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² Thom
 for June

A DREAM.¹

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely *Dreams* were ne'er indicted *Treason*.

On reading, in the public papers, the Laureate's² Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep than he imagined himself transported to the birthday levee; and in his dreaming fancy made the following Address.

Guid-mornin' to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On every new birth-day ye see,
A humble bardie wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is, such
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Among the birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang, busily
By monie a lord and lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said aye; very
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar ye trow ye ne'er do wrang, would make believe
But aye unerring steady, such
On sic a day.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter; will not
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:

¹ It is said that this poem injured Burns at court—at least, prevented the then existing administration from recommending him to the patronage of royalty. Some of his friends, fearing this, endeavoured to persuade him to keep it out of the Edinburgh edition; but in vain. We cannot see why the poem should have given offence to any but fools. It displays throughout an affectionate loyalty, mingled up with the soundest observation; and this should have gone far to excuse the homeliness of its address. On 30th April, 1787, he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, one of those friends:—"I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, critics, &c., as all these respective gentry do by my bardship." And in the same letter he says, "Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being, either in prose or verse."

² Thomas Warton was then poet-laureate. His ode for June 4, 1786, begins thus:—

When Freedom nursed her native fire
In ancient Greece, and ruled the lyre,

Her bards disdainful, from the tyrant's brow
The tinsel gifts of flattery tore,
But paid to guiltless power their willing vow,
And to the throne of virtuous kings, &c.

In his first "Epistle to John Lapraik," Burns had said—

Give me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learnin' I desire;

And this as a set-off against some learned rhymers who

Confuse their brains in college classes,

An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Burns is immeasurably superior, both in ease, strength, and freshness, to the laureate, and Oxford professor of poetry. But Warton was better than his ode would lead us to picture him, and the author of *The History of English Poetry* deserves well of students. Besides, Burns was too sensible and modest a man to speak lightly of learning otherwise than by way of joke, and was himself throughout life a learner to the limit of his opportunities.

So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

worse
perhaps one

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.¹

will not be worsted
cannot

riven patched

one

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation:
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

from

much

cow-house
would (have)

And now ye've gi'en auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaster;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

sore

behoved
paddock

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,²
A name not envy spairges,
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G-d-sake! let nae saving-fit
Abridge your bonnie barges
An' boats this day.³

child
asperges

¹ Alluding to the loss of the American colonies, formally given up at the close of the American war, by the treaties of 1783.

² William Pitt being the son of the celebrated Earl of Chatham.

³ In the spring of 1786 a great deal of discussion took place in the House of Commons about reducing the naval force, and particularly the giving up of 64-gun ships. Hence the allusion here to abridging the "bonnie barges an' boats."

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
 Beneath your high protection;
 An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
 An' gie her for dissection!
 But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
 In loyal, true affection,
 To pay your Queen, with due respect,
 My fealty and subjection
 This great birth-day.

disport herself
 stretch

Hail! Majesty Most Excellent!
 While nobles strive to please ye,
 Will ye accept a compliment
 A simple bardie gies ye?
 Thae bonnie bairn-time,¹ Heav'n has lent,
 Still higher may they heeze ye
 In bliss, till fate some day is sent
 For ever to release ye
 Frae care that day.

those children
 raise
 from

For you, young potentate of Wales,²
 I tell your Highness fairly,
 Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
 I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
 But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
 An' curse your folly sairly,
 That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
 Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie,³
 By night or day.

told
 sorely

Yet aft a ragged cowl's been known
 To make a noble aiver;
 Sae, ye may doucely fill a throne,
 For a' their clish-ma-claver:
 There, him⁴ at Agincourt wha shone,
 Few better were or braver;
 And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,⁵
 He was an unco shaver
 For monie a day.

colt
 cart-horse
 soberly
 tattle

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,⁶
 Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
 Although a ribbon at your lug
 Wad been a dress completer:

ear
 would (have)

¹ See note p. 89 for explanation and origin of this term.
² George IV., then Prince of Wales, already notorious for his dissolute and extravagant habits.
³ Charles James Fox, almost equally celebrated as a gamester and as a statesman, and with whom and

other distinguished Whigs the Prince of Wales then associated.
⁴ King Henry V.—R. B.
⁵ Sir John Falstaff: *vide* Shakspeare.—R. B.
⁶ The Duke of York, son of George III., and titular bishop of Osnaburg.

As ye disown yon paughty dog haughty
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug, haste!
Or, troth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks,¹ I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley,² stem an' stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn, iron
An', large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak' you guid as weel as braw, finely dressed
An' gie you lads a-plenty: sweethearts
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant aye; very
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want aye,
On onie day.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautet; very much caressed
But, ere the course o' life be thro',
It may be bitter sautet: salted
An' I hae seen their coggie fou, wooden dish full
That yet hae tarrow't at it; lingered through loathing
But or the day was done, I trow, ere
The laggen³ they hae clautet scraped
Fu' clean that day.⁴

¹ William IV., then post-captain in the royal navy.

² Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.—R. B.—The Duke of Clarence's connection with the celebrated Mrs. Jordan did not take place till 1791, so the poet cannot be referring to it. William IV. was born in 1765.

³ The angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish.—*Burns's Glossary*.

⁴ "Few of the commentators have ventured to discuss the merits of 'The Dream.' They are of a high order—the gaiety as well as the keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not the only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic: the poet, on reading the laureate's Ode, fell asleep—a likely consequence, for the birthday strains of those times were something of the dullest."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.—"The Dream,' if not a high, is a very characteristic effort: there never was

an easier hand-gallop of verse."—ALEXANDER SMITH.
—Dr. Hately Waddell quotes, as an "unconscious commentary" on this stanza, "the well-known verses attributed to the Princess Amelia—herself one, and the fairest, of these very blossoms and 'royal lasses dainty':—

Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,
I laughed, and danced, and talked, and sung
And proud of health, of freedom vain,
Dreamed not of sorrow, care, or pain,—
Concluding, in those hours of glee,
That all the world was made for me.

But when the hour of trial came,
When sickness shook this trembling frame
When folly's gay pursuits were o'er,
And I could sing and dance no more,—
It then occurred how sad 'twould be
Were this world only made for me.

A DEDICATION

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.¹

Expect na, sir, in this narration,
 A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
 To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
 An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
 Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace,²
 Perhaps related to the race;
 Then when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye,
 Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
 Set up a face, how I stop short,
 For fear your modesty be hurt.

supplicating, flattering
 praise

make a pretence

This may do—maun do, sir, wi' them wha
 Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;
 For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
 For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
 And when I downa yoke a naig,
 Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;³
 Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin,
 It's just sic poet, an' sic patron.

must
 bellyful
 so low

cannot nag

The Poet, some guid angel help him!
 Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp him.
 He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
 But only he's no just begun yet.

slap

The Patron, (sir, ye maun forgie me,
 I winna lie, come what will o' me)
 On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
 He's just—nae better than he should be.

must
 will not

I readily and freely grant,
 He downa see a poor man want;
 What's no his ane he winna tak it,
 What ance he says he winna break it;

cannot
 own
 once

¹ See a previous note (p. 143), in which an account of this early friend of Burns is given.

² The Duke of Hamilton.

³ "The old-remembered beggar, even in my own time . . . was expected to merit his quarters by something beyond an exposition of his distresses. He was often a talkative, facetious fellow, prompt at repartee, and not withheld from exercising his power that way by any respect of persons, his patched cloak giving him the privilege of the ancient jester. To be a *guid crack*—that is, to possess talents for conversation—was essential to the trade of a 'puir body' of the more esteemed class; and Burns, who delighted in the amusement their discourses afforded, seems to have looked forward with gloomy firmness to the

possibility of himself becoming, one day or other, a member of their itinerant society. In his poetical works it is alluded to so often, as perhaps to indicate that he considered the consummation as not utterly improbable. Thus in the fine dedication of his works to Gavin Hamilton, he says:

And when I downa yoke a naig,
 Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg.

Again, in his 'Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet,' he states that, in their closing career,

The last o't, the worst o't,
 Is only but to beg.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang:
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

sometimes

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature,
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,¹
It's no thro' terror of d-mn-tion;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' a winnock frae a wh-ore,
But point the rake that taks the door;
Be to the poor like ony whunstone,
And haud their noses to the grunstone;
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter—stick to sound believing!

third of a penny

window

whinstone

hold grindstone

Learn three-mile pray'rs, and half-mile graces,²
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

palms

O ye wha leave the springs of Calvin,
For gumlie dubs o' your ain delvin'!
Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;

muddy puddles

¹ See him the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed—

—*Epistle to M Math.*

² "Three-mile prayers, and hauf-mile graces" is also

an expression used in the "Epistle to M' Math," which, we need scarcely remind the reader, describes the not very cordial relations that existed between Gavin Hamilton and some of the neighbouring clergy.

¹ Mr.
because
is call

When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heaven commission gies him:
While o'er the harp pale Mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my dedication;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

almost forgot

So, sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, sir, to you:
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel'.

no foolish

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever—
I had amaist said, ever pray,
But that's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o't;
I'm baith dead-swøer, an' wretched ill o't;
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That kens or hears about you, Sir—

almost

both extremely averse

I shall

knows

“ May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk!¹
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far honour'd name²
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizen,
Are frae their nuptial labours risen:
Five bonnie lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows, stout an' able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays.
Shine on the evening o' his days;
Till his wee curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!”

howling

feed with fuel
dozen

handsome

great-grandchild

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
Wi' complimentary effusion:

¹ Mr. Hamilton was popularly known by this name, because he was a *writer*, as an attorney or solicitor is called in Scotland, and, perhaps, because he may have acted in the capacity of clerk to some of the county courts.

² Mr. Hamilton's wife was a Kennedy.

But whilst your wishes and endeavours
 Are blest with fortune's smiles and favours,
 I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
 Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent!)
 That iron-hearted carl, Want,
 Attended in his grim advances,
 By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
 While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
 Make you as poor a dog as I am,—
 Your humble servant then no more;
 For who would humbly serve the poor?
 But, by a poor man's hopes in heaven!
 While recollection's power is given,
 If, in the vale of humble life,
 The victim sad of fortune's strife,
 I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
 Should recognize my master dear,
 If friendless, low, we meet together,
 Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!¹

STANZAS ON NAETHING.²

EXTEMPORE EPISTLE TO GAVIN HAMILTON.

To you, sir, this summons I've sent,
 Pray, whip till the pownie is fraething; frothing
 But if you demand what I want,
 I'll honestly answer you—naething.

Ne'er scorn a poor Poet like me,
 For idly just living and breathing,
 While people of every degree
 Are busy employed about—naething.

Poor Centum-per-centum may fast,
 And grumble his hurdies their claiting, hips clothing
 He'll find when the balance is cast,
 He's gane to the devil for naething. gone

¹ It might have been expected that this poem would have opened the volume published at Kilmarnock, but it does not, though it is included in the work. Its freedom of sentiment and its irreverent handling of orthodoxy may have seemed even to its reckless writer, unknown as he then was beyond his own district, too much like a challenge to more rigid professors, and savouring too much of self-complacency for the piece to take so prominent a position.

² The above extempore verses were first published in Macmillan's edition of Burns, edited by Alexander Smith (London, 1865), and were extracted from a Common-place Book which the poet probably sent to Mrs. Dunlop, and which, now in a fragmentary condition, was then in the possession of Mr. Macmillan. In the MS. no date of composition is given, but it is evident from the second last stanza that the author's expected departure for Jamaica was approaching.

The courtier cringes and bows,
Ambition has likewise its plaything;
A coronet beams on his brows;
And what is a coronet?—naething.

Some quarrel the Presbyter gown,
Some quarrel episcopal graithing;
But every good fellow will own
The quarrel is a' about—naething.

vestments

The lover may sparkle and glow,
Approaching his bonnie bit gay thing;
But marriage will soon let him know
He's gotten—a buskit up naething.

The Poet may jingle and rhyme,
In hopes of a laureate wreathing,
And when he has wasted his time,
He's kindly rewarded wi'—naething.

The thundering bully may rage,
And swagger and swear like a heathen;
But collar him fast, I'll engage,
Ye'll find that his courage is—naething.

Last night wi' a feminine Whig—¹
A poet she couldna put faith in;
But soon we grew lovingly big,
I taught her her terrors were—naething.

Her Whigship was wonderful pleased,
But charmingly tickled wi' ae thing;
Her fingers I lovingly squeezed,
And kissed her, and promised her—naething.

The priest anathémas may threat—
Predicament, sir, that we're baith in;
But when honour's reveillé is beat
The holy artillery's—naething.

And now I must mount on the wave—
My voyage perhaps there is death in;
But what is a watery grave?
The drowning a Poet is naething.

And now as grim death's in my thought,
To you, sir, I make this bequeathing;
My service as long as ye've aught,
And my friendship, by God, when ye've naething!

¹ The word is not used here in its political sense. | heterodox John Goudie is called by the poet the
but in that of one of the rigidly orthodox. So the | "terror o' the Whigs."

TO A MEDICAL GENTLEMAN

(DR. MACKENZIE, MAUCLINE)

INVITING HIM TO ATTEND A MASONIC ANNIVERSARY MEETING ON ST. JOHN'S DAY, 24TH JUNE, 1786.

Friday first's the day appointed,
 By our Right Worshipful anointed,
 To hold our grand procession;
 To get a blad o' Johny's morals,
 And taste a swatch o' Manson's¹ barrels,
 I' the way of our profession.
 Our Master and the Brotherhood
 Wad a' be glad to see you:
 For me, I would be mair than proud,
 To share the mercies wi' you.
 If death, then, wi' scaith, then;
 Some mortal heart is hechtin,
 Inform him, and storm him,
 That Saturday ye'll fecht him.

quantity
 sample

would
 more
 refreshments

threatening
 bully
 fight

ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, AN. M. 5790.

FAREWELL TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE,

TARBOLTON.²

TUNE—"Good night and joy be wi' you a'!"

Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
 Dear brothers of the *mystic tie*!
 Ye favour'd, ye *enlighten'd* few.
 Companions of my social joy!
 Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
 Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',
 With melting heart, and brimful eye,
 I'll mind you still, tho' far awa'.

slippery ball

Oft have I met your social band,
 And spent the cheerful, festive night;
 Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
 Presided o'er the *sons of light*:

¹The keeper of the Tarbolton ale-house in which the brethren used to assemble. The reference to "Johny's morals" is not understood.

²Tarbolton is a village in Ayrshire, about 7 miles to the north-east of Ayr, in the parish of the same name—a plain country village without any feature of particular note. Tarbolton parish contains the farm of Lochlea, at which Burns lived from 1777 to 1784, and the whole locality has many reminiscences of the poet. In regard to his residence in the Tarbolton neigh-

bourhood see Lockhart's *Life* in vol. i. of this work. Wilson—the famous Dr. Hornbook—was parish schoolmaster of Tarbolton. The St. James's Lodge held their meetings in the back room of the humble cottage-like village inn. Of this lodge Burns was elected depute-master in July, 1784, and re-elected the following year: this explains the allusion to "supreme command," &c., in the second stanza. In all probability the verses were recited or sung about the 23d June, 1786.

D
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In regard



England.

TARBOLTON.
PROCESSION OF THE BROTHERS OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARRIS & CO. LONDON

SCOTTISH.

Age 27.]

¹ The refer
Montgomery
this time, as
² This was
of his depart

And by that *hieroglyphic* bright,
Which none but *Craftsmen* ever saw!
Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa'.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the *Grand Design*,
Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious *Architect* divine!
That you may keep th' *unerring line*,
Still rising by the *plummet's law*,
Till *Order* bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

And *you*,¹ farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that *highest badge* to wear!
Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble name,
To Masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

ON A SCOTCH BARD,²

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come mourn wi' me!

sup
rhyming

Our billie's gi'en us a' a jink,
An' owre the sea.

brother dodge

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random splore,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
In social key;

rollicking corps
frolie

For now he's ta'en anither shore,
An' owre the sea.

The bonnie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,

Wi' tearfu' ee;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the sea.

eye
wot sorely

¹ The reference here is probably to Captain James Montgomery, Grandmaster of St. James's Lodge at this time, as stated by Chambers.

² This was written on himself in 1786, in anticipation of his departure for the West Indies. In one MS. copy

in the author's handwriting, the line in the first verse,

Our billie's gi'en us a' a jink,
stands thus:

Our billie, *Rob*, has ta'en a jink

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
 Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummle,
 Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
 'Twad been nae plea;
 But he was gleg as ony wumble,
 That's owre the sea.

bungler
 fuss

sharp wimble

Auld cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
 An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;
 'Twill mak' her poor auld heart, I fear,
 In flinders flee;
 He was her laureate monie a year,
 That's owre the sea.

heartly
 salt

splinters

He saw misfortune's cauld nor'-wast
 Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
 A jillet brak his heart at last,¹
 Ill may she be!
 So, took a berth afore the mast,
 An' owre the sea.

jilt

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
 On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
 Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
 Could ill agree;
 So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
 An' owre the sea.

rod
 meal and water

rolled his thighs

He ne'er was gi'en to great misguiding,
 Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
 Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding;
 He dealt it free:
 The muse was a' that he took pride in,
 That's owre the sea.

pockets would not

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
 An' hap him in a cozie biel:
 Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
 And fu' o' glee;
 He wad na wrang'd the vera deil,
 That's owre the sea.

folks
 cover snug shel
 likable fellow

would not (have)

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
 Your native soil was right ill-willie;
 But may you flourish like a lily,
 Now bonnilie!
 I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
 Tho' owre the sea.

brother

gill (of whisky)

¹ This of course refers to Jean Armour's desertion of him, which did not quite break his heart however.

¹ Discard father's do towards th intense de Campbell) as impassi identify M Mauchline verses. Fr which app 1827, it wo for this h 74th year o late Mr. Ja Burns's Et shire, and ordinary sl

SONG—ELIZA.¹

TUNE—"Güderoy."

From thee, Eliza, I must go,
 And from my native shore;
 The cruel fates between us throw
 A boundless ocean's roar:
 But boundless oceans, roaring wide,
 Between my love and me,
 They never, never can divide
 My heart and soul from thee!

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
 The maid that I adore!
 A boding voice is in mine ear,
 We part to meet no more!
 But the last thro' that leaves my heart,
 While death stands victor by,
 That thro'g, Eliza, is thy part,
 And thine that latest sigh!

A BARD'S EPITAPH.²

Is there a whim-inspirèd fool,
 Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
 Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
 Let him draw near;
 And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
 And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
 Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,

¹ Discarded by Jean Armour, and driven from her father's door with contumely, Burns's affections turned towards the heroine of this song, and, in a far more intense degree towards his Highland Lassie (Mary Campbell), to whom he writes farewell strains fully as impassioned. Gilbert Burns, Chambers, and others identify Miss Betty (Miller), who figures as one of the Mauchline belles, as the inspirer of these evil-boding verses. From the following obituary notice, however, which appeared in the newspapers about the year 1827, it would appear that there is another claimant for this honour. "At Alva, on the 28th ult., in the 74th year of her age, Mrs. Elizabeth Black, relict of the late Mr. James Stewart, vintner there. . . . She was Burns's ELIZA. She was born and brought up in Ayrshire, and in the bloom of youth was possessed of no ordinary share of personal charms. She early became

acquainted with Burns, and made no small impression on his heart. She possessed several love-epistles he had addressed to her. It was when Scotia's bard intended emigrating from his own to a foreign shore that he wrote the stanzas beginning, 'From thee, Eliza, I must go'—the subject being of course Elizabeth Black." This claim is, however, rather weak; Elizabeth Black was acquainted with the Burns family before they came to Mossiel, but by this time she had left that part of the country, and they appear to have lost sight of her. Moreover, if she died in 1827, aged 74, she must have been six years older than Burns, and therefore hardly likely to have been a sweetheart of his.

² This beautiful and affecting poem was composed as a fitting conclusion to the volume published at Kilmarnock in 1786. The analysis of his own character here is perfect so far as it goes.

That weekly this area throng,
 O, pass not by!
 But, with a frater-feeling strong,
 Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment, clear,
 Can others teach the course to steer,
 Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
 Wild as the wave;
 Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear
 Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
 Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
 And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame;
 But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain'd his name.

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
 Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
 Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
 In low pursuit;
 Know, prudent, cautious self-control
 Is wisdom's root.¹

EPITAPH FOR ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.²

Know thou, O stranger to the fame
 Of this much lov'd, much honour'd name!
 (For none that knew him need be told)
 A warmer heart death ne'er made cold.

¹ "Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of the 'poor inhabitant,' it is supposed to be inscribed that—

Thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain'd his name—

Whom but himself—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and the record was authentic?—WORDSWORTH.—"Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters, Burns could show him.

The poor inhabitant below
 Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
 And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame;
 But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain'd his name.

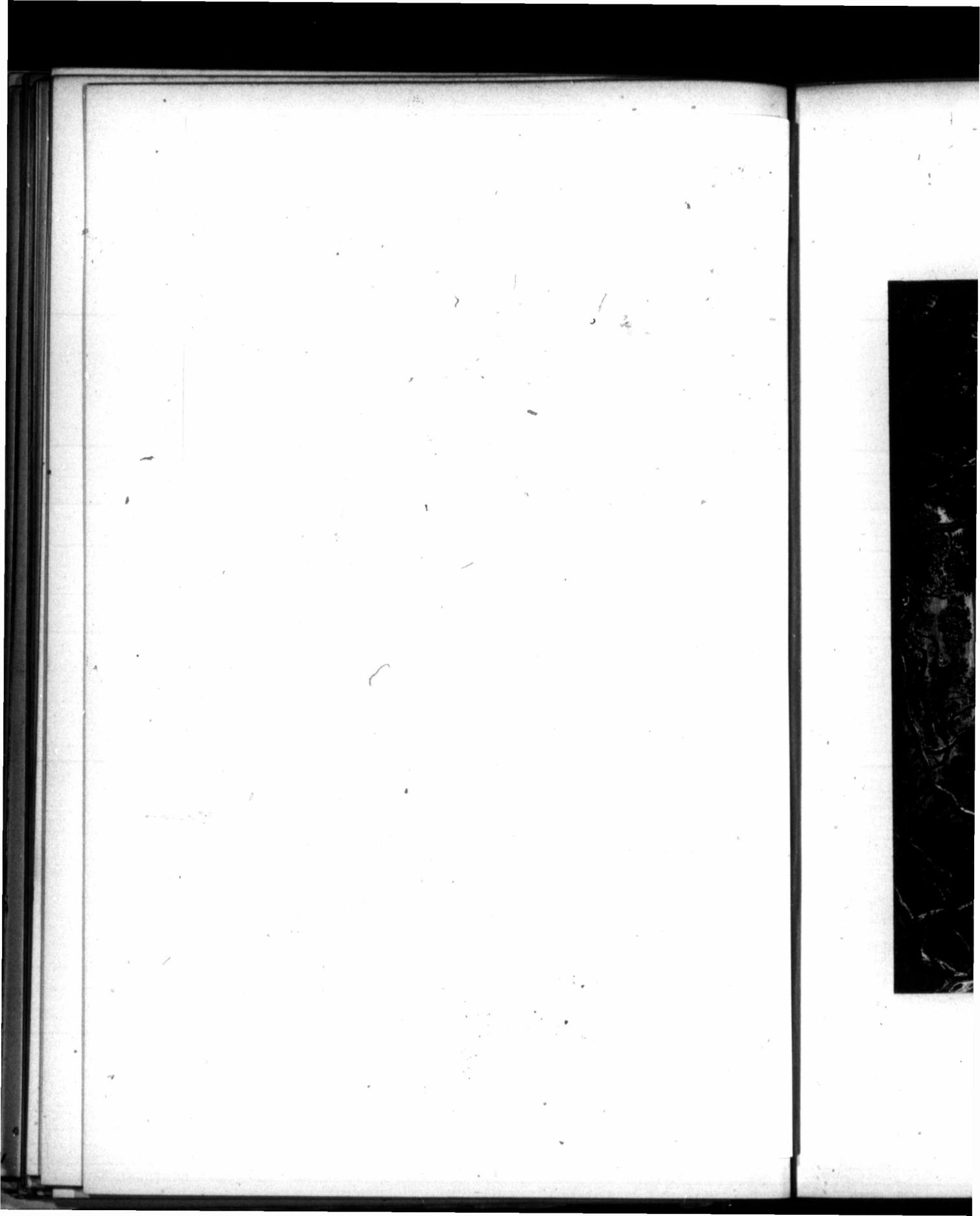
"Every one will be conscious of a likeness here to Wordsworth; and if Wordsworth did great things with this nobly plain manner, we must remember, what indeed he himself would always have been forward to acknowledge, that Burns used it before him."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

² Robert Aiken, writer or solicitor in Ayr, was one of Burns's earliest friends and patrons. He spoke in high terms of Burns's poetry wherever he went, and contributed materially to the spread of the poet's fame. By way of marking his sense of Aiken's friendly attentions, Burns inscribed to him "The Cotter's Saturday Night,"—and indited the above kindly and graceful epitaph.

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Blackie & Co., London, Glasgow & Edinburgh





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RIVER AYR AND HOWFORD BRIDGE.

Blackie & Son. London. Glasgow & Edinburgh

Age 27.]

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"My two songs on M
('Young Peggy blooms'
libels against the fastid
under pain of forfeiture
songs that had cost me
GAVIN HAMILTON, Mar

¹ Gavin Hamilton was an
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in song. The "Dedication"
received the praise of the
"takin' arts wi' grit and
mentioned; and in the "I
M'Math," his virtues are ex

² Wee Johny was long sup
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was a miserly, ill-conditione
bourhood of Mauchline, who
sheer ignorance, impertine
to have been frequently
See p. 439, vol. i. of *Hately*
of *Burns*, and letter in *Kiln*

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EPITAPH FOR GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.¹

The poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam'd;
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be sav'd or damn'd!

EPITAPH ON WEE JOHNY.²

HIC JACET WEE JOHNY.

Whoe'er thou art, O reader, know,
That death has murder'd Johnny!
An' here his body lies fu' low—
For saul he ne'er had ony.

SONG—THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.⁴

TUNE—"Miss Forbes' Farewell to Banff."

"My two songs on Miss W. Alexander ('The Lass o' Ballochmyle') and Miss Peggy Kennedy ('Young Peggy blooms') were likewise tried yesterday by a jury of literati, and found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste, and the author forbidden to print them under pain of forfeiture of character. I cannot help almost shedding a tear to the memory of two songs that had cost me some pains, and that I valued a good deal, but I must submit."—BURNS TO GAVIN HAMILTON, March 8, 1787.

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,
On ev'ry blade the pearls hang;³
The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets along:

¹ Gavin Hamilton was another of the poet's early friends. In this case also, Burns repaid his kindness in song. The "Dedication to Gavin Hamilton," has received the praise of the critics; elsewhere his "takin' arts wi' grit and sma'," are prominently mentioned; and in the "Epistle to the Rev. John M'Math," his virtues are expatiated upon at length.

² Wee Johnny was long supposed to be John Wilson, the printer of the first edition of the poems. It was considered to be a great joke that he should have printed his own "*hie jacet*," unsuspecting of its application. But Burns had no cause to think meanly of his printer, nor was Wilson such a simpleton as to be a ready or likely butt. The real "Wee Johnny" was a miserly, ill-conditioned cow-feeder in the neighbourhood of Mauchline, who was occasionally, through sheer ignorance, impertinent to the poet. He is said to have been frequently styled "Saulless Johnny." See p. 439, vol. i. of Hately Waddell's *Life and Works of Burns*, and letter in *Kilmarnock Standard* of Nov.

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29th, 1884, the statements in which were corroborated by Miss Begg (Burns's niece) at the date of writing.

³ *Hang* is not the present but the past tense; the conjugation of the verb in Scotland being *hing, hang, hung*.

⁴ The "Braes of Ballochmyle" extend along the right or north bank of the Ayr, between the village of Catrine and Howford Bridge, and are situated at the distance of about two miles from Burns's farm of Mossiel. They form the most important part of the pleasure-grounds connected with Ballochmyle House, the seat of a family named Alexander, one of the members of which, Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, was the subject of the poem. Presenting a mixture of steep bank and precipice, clothed with the most luxuriant natural wood, while a fine river sweeps round beneath them, they form a scene of bewildering beauty, exactly such as a poet would love to dream in, during a July eve. A short while before the incident which gave rise to the song, Balloch-

In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,
 All nature listening seem'd the while,
 Except where green-wood echoes rang,
 Among the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,
 My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,
 When musing in a lonely glade,
 A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy.
 Her look was like the morning's eye,
 Her air like nature's vernal smile,

myle, its broad lands, and lovely braes had been parted with, in consequence of declining circumstances, by the representative of an old and once powerful Ayrshire family, Sir John Whitefoord. This led to the composition by Burns of a song "The Braes o' Ballochmyle," already given (see p. 52).

Currie's account of the circumstances attending the composition of the present song is as follows:—"The whole course of the Ayr is fine; but the banks of that river, as it bends to the eastward above Mauchline, are singularly beautiful, and they were frequented, as may be imagined, by our poet in his solitary walks. Here the muse often visited him. In one of these wanderings he met among the woods a celebrated beauty of the west of Scotland—a lady of whom it is said, that the charms of her person correspond with the character of her mind. This incident gave rise, as might be expected, to a poem, of which an account will be found in the following letter, in which he inclosed it to the object of his inspiration." The letter is dated 18th November, 1786, some months after the song must have been written. After apologizing for the liberty of taking the lady whom he is addressing for the subject of his lyric, he proceeds—"I had roved out as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my muse—the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The sun was flaming over the distant western hills: not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you, your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart but at such a time must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene—and such the hour, when, in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the finest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape, or blest a poet's eye: those visionary bards excepted who hold commerce

with aerial beings! Had Calumny and Villainy taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object. What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain, dull, historic prose into metaphor and measure! The inclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene." Burns closed the letter with a request for the lady's consent to the publication of the song, in the second edition of his poems, but (a good deal to his chagrin) received no reply.

Miss Alexander has been blamed by various writers for her reserve; and certainly it is now to be regretted that she was not so fortunate as to cultivate the friendship of the poet. But when the plain fact is known, all such commentaries appear vain. Burns, though he wrote poetry which no contemporary, gentle or simple, approached, was, at this time at least, locally known chiefly for an unusual share of some of the failings of humanity. His character had been reported to Miss Alexander in terms which caused her to shrink from his correspondence; and while she did not fail to appreciate the beauty of his poetry, and the value of the compliment he had paid to her, she deemed it best, both for her own sake and for the feelings of her poetical admirer, to allow the affair to rest at the point which it had already reached.

She afterwards displayed no imperfect sense of the honour which the genius of Burns has conferred upon her. She preserved the original manuscript of the poem and letter with the greatest care; and these are now preserved in separate frames, and are to be seen hung up on the walls of the back parlour of the farmhouse of Mossiel, having been placed there by the late Boyd Alexander, for the inspection of visitors.

Miss Alexander died on the 5th June, 1843. She was aged eighty-eight at the time of her decease, and must therefore have been Burns's senior by three or four years.

"When I first read that song it made the hairs of my head creep, I thought it so beautiful. Burns took it heinously amiss that Miss Alexander never made any reply to the flaming letter which he sent her along with the song. I think it would have been very unnatural if she had; for how could she think with patience of a great black curly ploughman, with brawny limbs and broad shoulders, straining her nightly to his bosom. It was really too much of a good thing this!"—JAMES HOGG.

1 These lines friend Mr. John Kilmarnock, who assigned to some 1786. Burns wrote

Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
 "Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!"

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
 And sweet is night in autumn mild,
 When roving thro' the garden gay,
 Or wandering in the lonely wild.
 But Woman, Nature's darling child!
 There all her charms she does compile;
 Ev'n there her other works are foild
 By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

O had she been a country maid,
 And I the happy country swain,
 Tho' sheltered in the lowest shed
 That ever rose on Scotland's plain:
 Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,
 With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
 And nightly to my bosom strain
 The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle!

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,
 Where fame and honours lofty shine;
 And the ~~thrust~~ of gold might tempt the deep,
 Or downward seek the Indian mine;
 Give me the cot below the pine,
 To tend the flocks or till the soil,
 And every day have joys divine,
 * With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

A FAREWELL.¹

Farewell, dear friend! may guid luck hit you,
 And, 'mang her favourites admit you!
 If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
 May nane believe him!
 And ony deil that thinks to get you,
 Good Lord deceive him.

threaten infect

¹These lines were addressed by the poet to his friend Mr. John Kennedy, in an undated letter from Kilmarnock, which, from internal evidence, may be assigned to some day between 3d and 16th August, 1786. Burns was then contemplating his voyage to

Jamaica as immediate, and he mentions the recent publication of his poems thus:—"I have at last made my public appearance, and am solemnly inaugurated into the numerous class [of authors]." Another piece addressed to Kennedy will be found on p. 123.

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LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK NOTE.¹

Wae worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
 Fell source o' a' my woe and grief!
 For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
 For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
 I see the children of affliction
 Unaided, through thy curs'd restriction.
 I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile
 Amid his hapless victim's spoil,
 And, for thy potence, vainly wish'd
 To crush the villain in the dust.
 For lack o' thee I leave this much loved shore,
 Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

THE FAREWELL.²

The valiant in himself, what can he suffer?
 Or what does he regard his single woes?
 But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
 To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,
 To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
 To helpless children! then, O then! he feels
 The point of misery fest'ring in his heart,
 And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
 Such, such am I! undone!—Thomson's *Edward and Eleonora*

Farewell, old Scotia's bleak domains,
 Far dearer than the torrid plains
 Where rich ananas blow!
 Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
 A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
 My Jean's heart-rending throes!³
 Farewell, my Bess!⁴ tho' thou'rt bereft
 Of my parental care;
 A faithful brother I have left,
 My part in him thou'lt share!

¹ This note of the Bank of Scotland for one pound, dated 1st March, 1780, was probably part of the proceeds of the Kilmarnock edition of the poems, and the "Lines," therefore, were written in August, 1786; the last two lines give the strongest internal evidence for this. The piece appeared first in the *Morning Chronicle* of 27th May, 1814. The first edition of the poems with which they were incorporated was that of Gilbert Burns, 1820.

² "The Farewell" seems to bear internal evidence of the period of its composition, namely, the end of August, 1786, when the poet was looking forward to his voyage to the West Indies as in the immediate future; and when the event mentioned in next note

was close at hand. This latter would seem to have stirred up kinder feelings in the poet's mind towards Jean than he had recently entertained.

³ This no doubt refers to Jean Armour's approaching confinement. On the 3d September, 1786, Jean was delivered of twins, a boy and a girl.

⁴ The poet's illegitimate daughter, the "sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess" of the "Inventory." In a deed of assignment, dated 22d July, 1786, Burns made over all his goods, with the prospective profits of his poems, to his brother Gilbert, who in return "binds and obliges himself to aliment, clothe and educate my said natural child in a suitable manner, as if she was his own."

¹ James Smith person to whom addressed.

² When thus t Jean did no re Burns, we wond a few short mon parting love" on constancy, and e Mary was at th Highlands, prep "for our projec poem one would engaged his affe

Adieu too, to you too,
 My Smith,¹ my bosom frien';
 When kindly you mind me,
 O then befriend my Jean!

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
 From thee, my Jeannie, must I part!
 Thou, weeping, answ'rest, "No!"
 Alas! misfortune stares my face,
 And points to ruin and disgrace,
 I, for thy sake, must go!²
 Thee, Hamilton and Aiken³ dear,
 A grateful, warm adieu!
 I, with a much-indebted tear,
 Shall still remember you!
 All-hail then, the gale then,
 Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
 It rustles, and whistles—
 I'll never see thee more!

VERSES TO AN OLD SWEETHEART

AFTER HER MARRIAGE.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF HIS POEMS, PRESENTED TO THE LADY.⁴

Once fondly lov'd, and still remember'd dear;
 Sweet early object of my youthful vows!
 Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere,—
 Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple, artless rhymes,
 One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more,—
 Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
 Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

¹ James Smith, merchant in Mauchline—the same person to whom one of the poet's best epistles is addressed.

² When thus taking an anguished farewell of his Jean did no recollection rise up in the mind of Burns, we wonder, of the Highland Mary, with whom a few short months before he had "lived one day of parting love" on the banks of the Ayr, vowing eternal constancy, and exchanging Bibles in pledge thereof? Mary was at this time with her own people in the Highlands, preparing, to use the poet's own words, "for our projected change of life;" yet, from this poem one would think that no rival to Jean had ever engaged his affections.

³ Gavin Hamilton and Robert Aiken. These gentlemen were at this period the chief advisers and patrons of the poet. They have already been repeatedly mentioned in our pages.

⁴ In the Glenriddell MS. there is this note:—
 "Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the first edition of my poems, which I presented to an old sweetheart, then married. 'Twas the girl I mentioned in my letter to Dr. Moore, where I speak of taking the sun's altitude." This was Peggy Thomson, of Kirkoswald, who became the wife of a Mr. Neilson, of that place, whom Burns describes as an "old acquaintance and a most worthy fellow." See also vol. i. p. 215.

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. JAMES STEVEN,

On his text, Malachi ch. iv. 2: "And ye shall go forth, and grow up, like calves of the stall."

° Right, Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
 Tho' heretics may laugh;
 For instance, there's yoursel' just now,
 God knows, an unco calf!

remarkable

And should some patron be so kind,
 As bless you wi' a kirk,
 I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
 Ye're still as great a stirk.

young bullock

But, if the lover's raptur'd hour
 Shall ever be your lot,
 Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly power,
 You e'er should be a stot!

bullock

Tho' when some kind, connubial dear,
 Your but-and-ben adorns,
 The like has been that you may wear
 A noble head of horns.

parlour and kitchen

And in your lug, most reverend James,
 To hear you roar and rowte,
 Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
 To rank among the nowte.

ear

bellow

cattle

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
 Below a grassy hillock,
 Wi' justice they may mark your head—
 "Here lies a famous bullock!"¹

¹ Gilbert Burns tells us, that, on Sunday, 3d September, 1786, "the poet had been with Mr. Gavin Hamilton in the morning, who said jocularly to him, when he was going to church, in allusion to the injunction of some parents to their children, that he must be sure to bring him a note of the sermon at mid-day: this address to the reverend gentlemen on his text was accordingly produced." The poet's own account is somewhat different. In a letter to his friend Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, written a few days after the piece was composed, he says: "The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production on a wager with Mr. Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time." The preacher was assistant to the minister of Ardrossan, but on this occasion occupied Mr. Auld's pulpit at Mauchline. He was afterwards minister of the Scots Church, Crown Court, Covent Garden, London; and ultimately minister

of Kilwinning in Ayrshire. The name of "The Calf" stuck to him through life. In a letter to Burns from his younger brother, who died in London, we find this passage, dated 21st March, 1790:—"We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon to hear the Calf preach: he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever."—Towards the evening of the Sunday on which this memorable sermon was preached, and this vigorous *jeu d'esprit* written, Jean was delivered of twins. In the same letter to Mr. Muir, the poet says, "You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure, and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul." An arrangement was made between the Burns and Armour families, that the boy should be taken care of at Mossiel, the girl (who did not live long) kept at her mother's.

¹ These vers
 Pickering's Al
² Robert Bu
 portion" born

NATURE'S LAW,¹

A POEM HUMBL Y INSCRIBED TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

Great Nature spoke; observant man obey'd.—POPE.

Let other heroes boast their scars,
 The marks of sturt and strife;
 And other poets sing of wars,
 The plagues of human life;
 Shame fa' the fun; wi' sword and gun
 To slap mankind like lumber!
 I sing his name, and nobler fame
 Wha multiplies our number.

Great Nature spoke with air benign,
 "Go on, ye human race;
 This lower world I you resign;
 Be fruitful and increase.
 The liquid fire of strong desire,
 I've pour'd it in each bosom;
 Here, on this hand, does Mankind stand,
 And there, is Beauty's blossom."

The Hero of these artless strains,
 A lowly bard was he,
 Who sung his rhymes in Coila's plains,
 With meikle mirth and glee;
 Kind Nature's care had given his share
 Large, of the flaming current;
 And all devout he never sought
 To stem the sacred torrent.

He felt the powerful high behest
 Thrill vital thro' and thro';
 And sought a correspondent breast
 To give obedience due:
 Propitious Powers screen'd the young flow'rs,
 From mildews of abortion;
 And lo! the bard—a great reward—
 Has got a double portion.

Auld canty Coil may count the day
 As annual it returns,
 The third of Libra's equal sway
 That gave another Burns,²

cheery

¹ These verses were published for the first time in Pickering's Aldine edition, 1839.

² Robert Burns, junr., one of the twins or "double portion" born to the poet on the 3d of September,

1786; he died at Dumfries, 14th May, 1857 (see note to preceding poem). He seems to have had all his sire's warm passions and imprudence, but wanted his "poetic fire."

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| O' a' the num'rous human dools, | sorrows |
| Ill har'sts, daft bargains, cutty-stools, | harvests, foolish |
| Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools, | mould |
| Sad sight to see! | |
| The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools, | trouble |
| Thou bear'st the gree. | carriest off the palm |
| | |
| Where'er that place be priests ca' hell, | |
| Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell, | |
| And ranked plagues their numbers tell, | |
| In dreadfu' raw, | row |
| Thou, Tooth-ache, surely bear'st the bell | |
| Amang them a'! | |
| | |
| O thou grim, mischief-making chiel, | fellow |
| That gars the notes of discord squeel, | makes |
| Till daft mankind aft dance a reel | foolish |
| In gore a shoe-thick;— | |
| Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal | foes |
| A towmond's Tooth-ache! | twelve month's |

 WILLIE CHALMERS.¹

"W. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his dulcinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows."—R. B.

MADAM,

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Wi' braw new branks in mickle pride, | fine bridle |
| And eke a braw new brechan, | horse-collar |
| My Pegasus I'm got astride, | |
| And up Parnassus pechin'; | panting |
| Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush | sometimes over |
| The doited beastie stammers; | stupid |
| Then up he gets, and off he sets, | |
| For sake o' Willie Chalmers. | |
| | |
| I doubt na, lass, that weel-kenn'd name | well-known |
| May cost a pair o' blushes; | |
| I am nae stranger to your fame, | |
| Nor his warm-urgèd wishes. | |
| Your bonnie face sae mild and sweet | |
| His honest heart enamours, | |

¹Chalmers was a writer or solicitor in Ayr. How far the poem tended to the success of his suit has nowhere been mentioned. Lockhart obtained this piece from Lady Harriet Don, the sister of the poet's early patron, Lord Glencairn, and it was first published by him in

the second edition of the *Life of Robert Burns* in 1829 — that which is printed in the first volume of this work. The versification may have been suggested by an old Scottish lyric in the *Tea-Table Miscellany* with the title "*Omnia vincit Amor*."

And, faith, ye'll no be lost a whit,
Tho' waired on Willie Chalmers.

expended

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy Palmers;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

such two eyes

I doubt na Fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou'd pouter'd priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But oh! what signifies to you
His lexicons and grammars:
The feeling heart's the royal blue,
And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

offer

prim powdered

Some gapin', glowrin', countra laird,
May warsle for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And hoast up some palaver.
My bonnie maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

staring land-owner

strive

scratch ear stroke

cough

barefooted trip

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his dues,
For deil a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.

flatter

abo

ANSWER TO A POETICAL EPISTLE FROM A TAILOR.¹

What ails you now, ye lousie b—h,
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
Losh man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bodkin's bauld,

such

grip (?)

¹ Thomas Walker, a tailor, residing at Poole, near Ochiltree, and one of a pious turn of mind, sent a rhyming epistle to Burns, remonstrating with him on

his alleged misdemeanours, particularly in regard to the fair sex. The epistle shows good intention on the part of the poor tailor, but nothing more, being alike

deficient in tact
piece of advice
suffice as a spec

O Rob!
An' ste
Or som
You'll

In another vers

Fu' we

And he adds, ra

There v

But poor Burns

for him in the n

Ye'll n

Nae ki

I did na suffer half sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.¹

[A stanza omitted.]

King David, o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief,
As fill'd his after life wi' grief
An' bloody rants, riots
An' yet he's rank'd amang the chief
O' lang-syne saunts. saints

And maybe, Tam, for a' my caunts, tricks
My wicked rhymes, an' drucken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Clootie's haunts
An unco slip² yet, clever
An' snugly sit amang the saunts
At Davie's hip yet.

But, fegs, the Session says I maun faith must
Gae fa' upo' anither plan,
Than garrin' lasses cowp the cran turn topsy-turvy
Clean heels owre body,
And sairly thole their mither's ban, suffer
Afore the howdy. midwife

This leads me on to tell for sport,
How I did with the Session sort—
Auld Clinkum at the Inner port the bell-ringer
Cried three times, "Robin!
Come hither, lad, an' answer for't,
Ye're blam'd for jobbin'."

deficient in tact and talent, whether considered as a piece of advice or as a poem. A single verse may suffice as a specimen:—

O Bab! lay by thy foolish tricks,
An' steer nae mair the female sex,
Or some day ye'll come through the pricks
An' that ye'll see;
You'll find hard living wi' Auld Nicks:
I'm wae for thee.

In another verse he says—

Fu' weel ye ken ye'll gang to hell,—

And he adds, rather ungallantly,—

There WALTH O' WOMEN ye'll get near;—

But poor Burns is not to hold this as any consolation for him in the nether world; for,

Ye'll never say, my bonnie dear,
Come, gie's a kiss
Nae kissing there—ye'll grin and sneer,
An' itther hiss.

The answer of Burns to this ludicrous doggerel, was the production given above. In the *Ayrshire Contemporaries of Burns* it is stated that this answer was not really written by Burns, but by William Simson, the schoolmaster of Ochiltree, to whom Burns addresses one of his epistles. Simson, according to this authority, was in Walker's secret with regard to the letter he had sent to Burns, and as Burns returned no answer, Simson, as a joke, wrote the above with the signature of Robert Burns, and despatched it to the tailor. We have no evidence to gainsay this, beyond the internal evidence of the piece itself, which, according to our judgment, displays more of Burns's vigour and humour, though in its coarsest mood, than any other production of William Simson's which we have seen. Besides, the poem was printed in Stewart and Meikle's *Tracts*, in 1799, and ascribed to Burns. Both Simson and Walker, who long survived this date, could not but have seen these *Tracts*, and they never challenged the Burns authorship.

¹ See vol. i. p. 31.

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
 An' snoov'd awa' before the Session—
 I made an open, fair confession,
 I scorn'd to lie;
 An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,
 Fell foul o' me.

went sheepishly
 then

A fornicator loun' he call'd me,
 An' said my faut frae bliss expell'd me;
 I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me,
 " But what the matter? "

[Three stanzas and two lines omitted here.]

But, Sir, this pleas'd them warst ava,
 An' therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
 I said, " Guid night," and cam awa',
 And left the Session;
 I saw they were resolved a'
 On my oppression.

THE BRIGS OF AYR,¹

A POEM.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

The simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
 Learning his tuneful trade from every bough—
 The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
 Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush;
 The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
 Or deep-ton'd plovers, gray, wild-whistling o'er the hill—
 Shall he, nurs'd in the peasant's lowly shed,
 To hardy independence bravely bred,

¹ The two bridges of Ayr, crossing the river of the same name, and connecting Ayr proper with Wallace-town and Newton-upon-Ayr, are respectively known as the Auld Brig and the New Brig. The Auld Brig is the upper of the two, being about 150 yards from the New Brig. It seems to have been erected sometime between 1470 and 1525, though it is commonly held, but without any proof, to have been erected at a much earlier date. It consists of four lofty arches of solid architecture, but being steep and narrow, a new bridge was raised in 1785-88 to give additional accommodation for traffic. For any public advantages derived from this latter structure the community was chiefly indebted to Mr. Ballantine, who was provost during the time of its erection, and who died in 1812. To this gentleman, a banker by profession, Burns had been introduced by Mr. Robert Aiken, his earliest Ayr patron; and Mr. Ballantine proved his sense of

the poet's personal and poetical merits by generously offering to advance the sum necessary for printing the second edition of his poems, but at the same time advised him to publish in Edinburgh instead of in Kilmarnock, which he shortly afterwards did, and with so much success. It was therefore for more than one reason that Burns inscribed to him the present poem. The new bridge was designed by Robert Adam, and was a neat structure of five arches (see plate). It was so much injured by the floods of 1877 that it had to be taken down and rebuilt (1878-79), thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Auld Brig—

I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn.

The Auld Brig is still serviceable.—The poem of the "Brigs of Ayr" was one of those added in the first Edinburgh edition of the poet's works (1787).

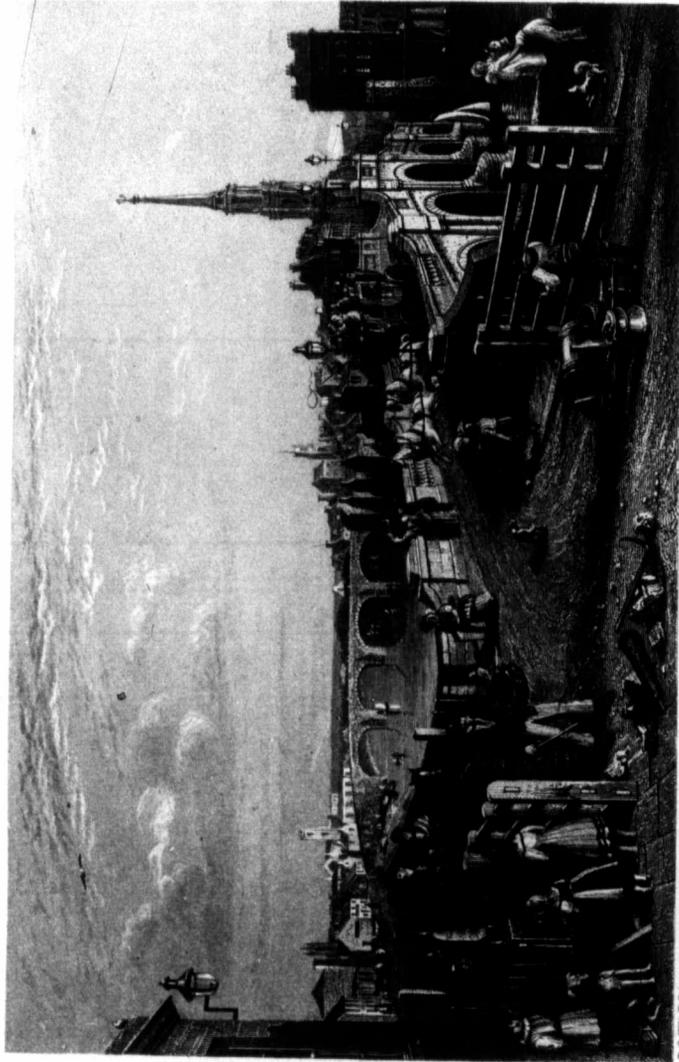
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Ayr patrol



J. Higham

AYR - THE TWA BRIGS.

Blackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh.

Age 27.]

By early
And train
Shall he
The serv
Or labour
With all
No! the
And thr
He glo
Fame, h
Still, if
Skill'd
When I
And ha
With h
The go

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And t
Potato
Of cor
The b
Unnu
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Exc
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The
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By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
 And train'd to arms in stern misfortune's field—
 Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
 The servile mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
 Or labour hard the panegyric close,
 With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
 No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
 And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
 He glows with all the spirit of the bard,
 Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward!
 Still, if some patron's gen'rous care he trace,
 Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace;
 When Ballantyne befriends his humble name,
 And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
 With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells;
 The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,
 And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap;
 Potatoe-bings are snuggèd up frae scaith
 Of coming winter's biting, frosty breath;
 The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
 Unnumber'd buds' an' flow'rs' delicious spoils,
 Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
 Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
 The death o' devils smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
 The thundering guns are heard on every side,
 The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
 The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
 Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
 (What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
 And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
 Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs;
 Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
 Except perhaps the robin's whistling glee,
 Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
 The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
 Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noon-tide blaze,
 While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
 Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
 Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
 By whim inspir'd, or haply press'd wi' care,
 He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
 And down by Simpson's¹ wheel'd the left about—

-covering
 thatch and straw-rope
 -heaps

smothered smoke

no more

small half-grown

one borough

¹ A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.—R. B.

Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
 To witness what I after shall narrate;
 Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
 He wander'd out he knew not where or why.
 The drowsy Dungeon-clock had number'd two,
 And Wallace Tower¹ had sworn the fact was true:
 The tide-swoln firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
 Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:
 All else was hush'd as Nature's closèd ee: eye
 The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree:
 The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
 Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
 The clanging sugh of whistling wings is heard; sough
 Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
 Swift as the gos² drives on the wheeling hare:
 Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears, one
 The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
 Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
 The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside over
 (That bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
 And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk; know
 Fays, spunkies, kelpies, a', they can explain them, sprites, water-goblins
 And ev'n the very deils they brawly ken them.) very well know
 Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
 The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face:³
 He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang, wrestled
 Yet teughly doure, he bade an unco bang. toughly obdurate stood a mighty stroke
 New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat, dressed fine
 That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adam⁴ got; from
 In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
 Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head. rings twisted ornaments

¹ The two steeples.—R. B.—The Dungeon-clock, alluded to above, was placed at the top of an old steeple which stood till the year 1825, in the Sand-gate, the street which is seen in the accompanying plate opening from the farther end of the new bridge. Its connection with an ancient jail of the burgh, removed at an earlier period, was what conferred upon the clock and tower this ominous appellation—

The drowsy Dungeon-clock had number'd two,
 And Wallace Tower had sworn the fact was true.

The Wallace Tower was an anomalous piece of old masonry which stood in the eastern part of the High Street of Ayr, at the head of a lane named the Mill Vennel, which leads to the ford known as the Ducat Stream. The lower part was in reality one of those towers or *peels* which formerly stood at the entrances of many Scottish towns for defence; and the wooden steeple above, containing a clock and surmounted by a vane, had been, as appeared from indubitable circumstances, the addition of a comparatively recent

era. Tradition represented this tower as the place in which William Wallace was confined, as stated by Blind Harry; but it is possible that the name, derived from some other circumstance, may be the sole origin of this dubious statement. Having become ruinous, an attempt was made in 1830 to repair it, which ended in the complete demolition of the ancient structure, and the erection of a new one on the same site, the top of which is seen immediately over the end of the old bridge. The new Wallace Tower is a Gothic building, 113 feet high, containing at the top the clock and bells of the Dungeon steeple, and ornamented in front with a statue of William Wallace, executed by Mr. Thom, the well-known self-taught sculptor.

² The gos-hawk, or falcon.—R. B.

³ This would no doubt have been highly gratifying to Pinkerton to learn: that the Picts were a Gothic people was part of his religion.

⁴ Robert Adam, the well-known architect, born 1728, died 1792.

¹ Think yourself no
 verbial expression.

² A noted ford, just
 It was at times very d

The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
 Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;
 It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his ee,
 And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
 Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
 He, down the water, gies him this guid-e'en:—

neighbour eye

spited

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank¹
 Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank!
 But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
 Tho', faith, that date, I doubt ye'll never see,
 There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
 Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

stretched

by the time you are

wager third of a penny

fanciful notions

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
 Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
 Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
 Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
 Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
 Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time?
 There's men o' taste would tak the Ducat Stream,²
 Tho' they should cast the very sark an' swim,
 Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
 Of sic an ugly Gothie hulk as you.

manners

shirt

such

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
 This monie a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
 And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
 I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!
 As yet ye little ken about the matter,
 But twa-three winters will inform you better.
 When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
 Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
 Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
 Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
 Or haunted Garpal³ draws his feeble source,
 Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting thowes,
 In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
 While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
 Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;

fool

age sorely worn out

two or three

thaws

snow-water rolls

flood

out of the way

¹ Think yourself no unimportant personage—a proverbial expression.

² A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.—R. B.—It was at times very dangerous.

³ The banks of *Garpal Water* is one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of *Ghaists*, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.—R. B.

And from Glenbuck,¹ down to the Ratton-key,²
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
 Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
 And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies:
 A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
 That Architecture's noble art is lost!

tumble
 muddy splashes

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say o't!
 The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
 Gaunt, ghaistly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
 Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
 O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
 Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves:
 Windows and doors, in nameless sculptures drest,
 With order, symmetry, or taste unblest:
 Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
 The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
 Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
 And still the second dread command be free,
 Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea;
 Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
 Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;
 Fit only for a doited monkish race,
 Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
 Or cuifs of later times, wha held the notion
 That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
 Fancies that our guid brugh denies protection,
 And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

in truth
 lost way
 ghost-

muddle-headed
 blockheads
 borough

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
 Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
 Ye worthy provoses,³ an' monie a bailie,
 Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye;
 Ye dainty deacons, and ye douce conveeners,
 To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
 Ye godly councils wha hae blest this town;
 Ye godly brethren of the sacred gown,
 Wha meekly gae your hurdies to the smiters;
 And (what would now be strange) ye godly writers:⁴
 A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
 Were ye but here, what would ye say or do?
 How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
 To see each melancholy alteration;

coevals
 provosts
 worthy grave (or staid)
 gave thighs
 sober above the flood

¹ The source of the river Ayr.—R. B.

² A small landing place above the large quay.—R. B.

³ The *provost* in a Scotch town is equivalent to a mayor in an English; the *bailie* to an alderman; a

deacon is the president of an incorporated trade, the *convenor* having the function of calling the meetings.

⁴ This is as much as to say that the Ayr *writers* or solicitors were by no means godly in Burns's time.

¹ A well-known p
 violin.—R. B.—H
 VOL. II.

Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
 The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
 How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
 And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd!
 No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
 But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
 Harmonious concert rung in every part,
 While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears,
 A venerable chief advanc'd in years;
 His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
 His manly leg with garter tangle bound.
 Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
 Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
 Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came rural Joy,
 And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
 All-cheering plenty, with her flowing horn,
 Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
 Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
 By Hospitality with cloudless brow.
 Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
 From where the Feal¹ wild-woody coverts hide;
 Benevolence,² with mild, benignant air,
 A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair:³
 Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
 From simple Catrine,³ their long-lov'd abode:
 Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
 To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
 The broken iron instruments of death;
 At sight of whom our Sprites forgot their kindling wrath.⁴

¹ "Feal is a small stream which runs near Coilsfield, then the seat of Colonel Montgomery."—GILBERT BURNS.—More commonly written *Fail*. Colonel Hugh Montgomery, latterly twelfth Earl of Eglinton, was a soldier and a patriotic landed proprietor.

² "The poet alludes here to Mrs. Stewart of Stair. Stair was then in her possession. She removed to Afton Lodge, on the banks of the Afton, a stream which he afterwards celebrated in a song entitled 'Afton Water.'"—CURRIE.—She was among the first of the wealthier classes to take notice of Burns, some of his poems having been brought under her eye.

³ "A sweet little place on the banks of the Ayr, belonging to Professor Dugald Stewart, where he used to reside during the interval of his labours in the university (as his father had done before him), till banished from it by the erection of a cotton-mill village immediately adjoining."—GILBERT BURNS.

⁴ "Fergusson wrote a dialogue between the 'Causeway and the Plainstones' of Edinburgh. This probably suggested to Burns his dialogue between the Old and New Bridge over the river Ayr. The nature of such subjects requires that they shall be treated

humorously, and Fergusson has attempted nothing beyond this. Though the Causeway and the Plainstones talk together, no attempt is made to personify the speakers. A cadie heard the conversation, and reported it to the poet. In the dialogue between the 'Brigs of Ayr,' Burns himself is the auditor, and the time and occasion in which it occurred are related with great circumstantiality. The poet, 'pressed by care,' or 'inspired by whim,' had left his bed in the town of Ayr, and wandered out alone in the darkness and solitude of a winter night, to the mouth of the river, where the stillness was interrupted only by the rushing sound of the conflux of the tide. It was after midnight. The Dungeon-clock had struck two, and the sound had been repeated by the Wallace Tower. All else was hushed. The moon shone brightly and

The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
 Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering strea

In this situation, the listening bard hears the "clanging sigh" of wings moving through the air, and speedily he perceives two beings reared the one on the Old, the other on the New bridge, whose form

LYING AT

and attire he
 each other he
 comparison of
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 and the young
 ners with thos
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Next follow
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 Hospitality,

"This poem
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¹The "reve
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 1764, and die
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A PRAYER.

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING VERSES
IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.¹

O Thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above!
I know thou wilt me hear,
When, for this scene of peace and love,
I make my pray'r sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleas'd to spare!
To bless his little filial flock,
And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush;

and attire he describes, and whose conversation with each other he rehearses. These geni enter into a comparison of the respective edifices over which they preside, and afterwards, as is usual between the old and the young, compare modern characters and manners with those of past times. They differ, as may be expected, and taunt, and scold each other in broad Scotch. This conversation, which is certainly humorous, may be considered as the proper business of the poem. As the debate runs high and threatens serious consequences, all at once it is interrupted by a new scene of wonders:

A fairy train appear'd in order bright. . .

Next follow a number of other allegorical beings, among whom are the four Seasons, Rural Joy, Plenty, Hospitality, Courage, &c.

"This poem, irregular and imperfect as it is, displays various and powerful talents, and may serve to illustrate the genius of Burns. In particular it affords a striking instance of his being carried beyond his original purpose by the powers of imagination."—CURRIE.—Robert Fergusson's poem, "The Ghaists, a Kirkyard Eclogue," in which a dialogue is maintained between Watson's and Heriot's Hospitals, was also plainly in Burns's eye when composing "The Brigs of Ayr."

¹The "reverend friend" here meant was Dr. George Lawrie, parish minister of Loudoun in Ayrshire. He was born in 1729, was ordained minister of Loudoun in 1764, and died in 1799. He was an intimate friend of Principal Robertson, Dr. Hugh Blair, Dr. James Macknight, Dr. Blacklock, and several other eminent members of the republic of letters in his own day. He married a daughter of Dr. Archibald Campbell, pro-

fessor of church history, New College, St. Andrews. He had a large family, and the manse at St. Margaret's Hill was the home of one of the happiest of households. Gilbert Burns says—"The first time Robert heard the spinet played was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, minister of Loudoun. . . . Dr. Lawrie has several accomplished daughters; one of them played the spinet; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet, and the other guests, mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept." Dr. Archibald Lawrie, son of Dr. Lawrie, and his successor as minister of Loudoun, remembered that next morning the family were waiting breakfast, as Burns had not come down. Young Mr. Lawrie was sent upstairs to see what had detained him. He met him coming down. "Well, Mr. Burns, how did you sleep last night?" "Sleep, my young friend! I have scarcely slept at all—I have been praying all night. If you go up to the room, you will find my prayers on the table." Mr. Lawrie did so, and found the above verses. Dr. Lawrie had read, and greatly admired the unpretentious Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems, and had sent the book to his friend Dr. Blacklock, in Edinburgh, who returned an answer expressing high admiration of the poems. Dr. Lawrie had this letter placed in the hands of Burns through the medium of Gavin Hamilton. The letter will be found quoted in Lockhart's *Life* (vol. i. p. 52), and the effect which it produced on Burns may be read there, and in the poet's letter to Dr. Moore (vol. i. p. 147). Portraits of Dr. Lawrie and Dr. Blacklock will be found in vol. iv. of this work in connection with letters of the poet to them.

Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
Guide thou their steps away!

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in Heaven!

SONG—THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATH'RING FAST.

TUNE—"Rostin Castle."

"I had for some time been skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised, ungrateful people had uncoupled the merciless legal pack at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed a song, 'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' which was to be the last effort of my muse in Caledonia, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by rousing my poetic ambition." So wrote Burns in the celebrated letter to Dr. Moore. (See vol. i. p. 147.) In the Glenriddell copy of *Johnson's Museum* he wrote: "I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica—I meant it as a farewell dirge to my native land."¹

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain.
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure,
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;

¹ Professor Walker gives a somewhat different account of the origin of this fine poem, the facts being communicated by the poet himself when the professor met him at Dr. Blacklock's in Edinburgh. "He had left Dr. Lawrie's family after a visit (see note to the verses immediately preceding), which he expected to be the last, and on his way home had to cross a wide stretch of solitary moor. His mind was strongly affected by parting for ever with a scene where he had tasted so much elegant and social pleasure, and depressed by the contrasted gloom of his prospects. The aspect of nature harmonized with his feelings. It was a lowering and heavy evening in the end of autumn. The wind was up and whistled through the rushes and long spear-grass which bent before it. The clouds were

driving across the sky; and cold pelting showers at intervals added discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind. Under these circumstances, and in this frame, Burns composed his poem." It remains to be added here that Professor Walker's chronology is somewhat faulty. The vessel in which Burns had taken his passage was timed to sail about the 1st September, 1786, and the letter from Dr. Blacklock was dated 4th September. Now according to Burns it was before this that the poem was composed. The song, too, was one of a set sent to Mrs. Stewart of Stair earlier on in that month. Instead, therefore, of "the end of autumn," as Walker puts it, the beginning seems the correct date of the composition of the song.

¹ The meeti
Catrine, the s
23d, 1786—an
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earl of Selkirk
Of an ardent
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the time. B
Friends of L
pendent of L
He was also

Across her placid, azure sky,
 She sees the scowling tempest fly:
 Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,—
 I think upon the stormy wave,
 Where many a danger I must dare,
 Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
 'Tis not that fatal deadly shore;
 Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
 The wretched have no more to fear!
 But round my heart the ties are bound,
 That heart transpierc'd with many a wound;
 These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
 To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
 Her heathy moors and winding vales;
 The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
 Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
 Farewell, my friends! Farewell, my foes!
 My peace with these—my love with those—
 The bursting tears my heart declare,
 Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr!

LINES ON MEETING LORD DAER.¹

This wot ye all whom it concerns,
 I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
 October twenty-third,
 A ne'er-to-be forgotten day,
 Sae far I sprachled up the brae,
 I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

clambered slope

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
 Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests,
 Wi' rev'rence be it spoken;

drunken lawyers'
 dead-drunk

¹ The meeting celebrated in this poem took place at Catrine, the seat of Professor Dugald Stewart, October 23d, 1786—and the impression made on the poet's mind by the kindness and frankness of Lord Daer, was never effaced. His lordship was eldest son to Dunbar, fourth earl of Selkirk, and had been a pupil of the professor's. Of an ardent and enterprising disposition, he entered with enthusiasm into the views of the reformers of the time. He was a member of the society of the Friends of the People, and the friend and correspondent of Lavoisier, Condorcet, and Rochefoucault. He was also a skilful and extensive agricultural im-

prover. In the "mid-time of his days," and too soon for his country, he was cut off by consumption, Nov. 5th, 1794. Burns had been taken to Professor Stewart's house by Dr. Mackenzie of Mauchline. His natural embarrassment at being brought face to face with the famous Edinburgh literary magnate, was increased by the accidental arrival of Lord Daer. The professor, in a communication to Dr. Currie, gives a very interesting account of the poet's deportment on this trying occasion. It will be found at p. 155, vol. i. of this work. In a letter to Dr. Mackenzie Burns says the verses were "really extempore, but a little corrected since."

I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

slake

But wi' a Lord!—stand out, my shin!
A Lord—a peer¹—an Earl's son!
Up higher yet my bonnet!
An' sic a Lord!—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

over six feet

But, oh! for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
And how he star'd and stammer'd,
When goavin', as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpin' on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

bewildered stare

walking stupidly bridle

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his Lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen:
Except good-sense and social glee,
An' (what surprised me) modesty,
I markèd nought uncommon.

stole

I watch'd the symptoms o' the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,²
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

pride of rank

the deuce

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as weel's another;
Nae honest worthy man need care,
To meet with noble, youthful Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

SONG—THE SONS OF OLD KILLIE.³

TUNE—"Shawnboy."

Ye sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;

¹ He was not properly speaking a peer, since his father was still alive and he had no seat in the House of Lords.

² But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he.

—The Twa Dogs.

³ A Mr. William Parker, a Kilmarnock gentleman, was the "Willie" of the first line of this song. He was master of the Kilmarnock Kilwinning Lodge on the occasion of the poet's being made an honorary member of the lodge, 26th October, 1786. He was a banker by profession.

[1786.

ix feet

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The first of these is the
 fact that the House of
 Representatives has
 passed a resolution
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KILMARNOCK.

MARKET CROSS

Blackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh.

D. Wilson

When this wort
Ossian's phrase, "
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¹ Mr. Thomas Sams
Burns, was a nursery
nock, much addicted to
and was at the same ti
freemason. The origi
Burns himself. Mr. S
12th December, 1795,
years after his elegy w
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scribed, *verbatim*, the
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mains of the Rev. Dr.
Robertson, who are m
the first verse of the el
'weel-worn clay' of th
all occupy one spot in t
stanza in the poem—the
separated from that of
of ground."—M'KAY'S.

² A certain preacher
million. *Vide* the "O

³ Another preacher,
few, who was at that t

Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
 To sit in that honoured station.
 I've little to say, but only to pray,
 As praying's the ton of your fashion;
 A prayer from the Muse you well may excuse,
 'Tis seldom her favourite passion.

Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
 Who marked each element's border;
 Who formed this frame with beneficent aim,
 Whose sovereign statute is order;
 Within this dear mansion, may wayward contention
 Or withered Envy ne'er enter;
 May secrecy round be the mystical bound.
 And brotherly Love be the centre!

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.¹

When this worthy old *sportsman* went out, last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields," and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.—R. B., 1787.

An honest man's the noblest work of God.—POPE.

Has auld Kilmarnock⁴ seen the deil?
 Or great Mackinlay² thrawn his heel? twisted
 Or Robertson³ again grown weel,
 To preach an' read?
 "Na, waur than a!" cries ilka chiel, wise every person
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

¹ Mr. Thomas Samson, one of the early friends of Burns, was a nurseryman and seedsman in Kilmarnock, much addicted to shooting, fishing, and curling, and was at the same time an enthusiastic and genial freemason. The origin of the elegy is explained by Burns himself. Mr. Samson died *in reality* on the 12th December, 1795, aged seventy-two—nearly ten years after his elegy was written. On his gravestone at the west end of the church at Kilmarnock, is inscribed, *verbatim*, the epitaph which Burns had prepared for him so long before. "It may be worth while to add, as a curious coincidence, that the remains of the Rev. Dr. Mackinlay and the Rev. John Robertson, who are mentioned with Mr. Samson in the first verse of the elegy, are buried so near to the 'weel-worn clay' of the worthy sportsman, that they all occupy one spot in the churchyard, as they do one stanza in the poem—the dust of the two former being separated from that of the latter by only a few inches of ground."—M'KAY'S *History of Kilmarnock*, p. 189.

² A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* the "Ordination," stanza ii.]—R. B.

³ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him, see also

the "Ordination," stanza ix.]—R. B. Notices of these preachers will be found in previous notes.

⁴ Kilmarnock is the principal seat of population in the county of Ayr, and one of the most active and successful of the manufacturing towns of Scotland. It is connected with the history of Burns—from whose residence at Mossiel it is about nine miles distant—by its being the place where his poems were first printed in 1786, while some of the leading men in and about the town were among the earliest of his patrons. Kilmarnock and its citizens are repeatedly mentioned or referred to in Burns's writings. Erected in 1591 into a burgh of barony, under the family of Boyd, subsequently Earls of Kilmarnock—whose chief residence, named Dean Castle, is in the neighbourhood—this town was distinguished early in the seventeenth century for efforts of a humble kind in the woollen manufacture. In the days of Burns the making of blue bonnets for the peasantry, of carpets, and of boots and shoes, was practised in it to a considerable extent, which will enable the reader to comprehend the more obscure than elegant distich with which the poem of the "Ordination" commences. The town then consisted chiefly of a cluster of mean

| | |
|---|---|
| Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane, An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane, An' cleed her bairns, man, wife an' wean, In mourning weed; To Death, she's dearly paid the kane: Tam Samson's dead! | groan weep alone clothe child rent in kind |
| The brethren of the mystic level May hing their head in woefu' bevel, While by their nose the tears will revel, Like ony bead; Death's gien the lodge an unco devel: Tam Samson's dead! | hang terrible blow |
| When winter muffles up his cloak, And binds the mire like a rock; When to the loughs the curlers flock, Wi' gleesome speed, Wha will they station at the cock? Tam Samson's dead! | ponds mark |
| He was the king o' a' the core, To guard, or draw, or wick ¹ a bore, Or up the rink ² like Jehu roa' ³ In time of need; But now he lags on Death's hog-score: ³ Tam Samson's dead! | corps |
| Now safe the stately sawmont sail, And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail, And eels weel kend for souple tail, And geds for greed, Since dark in Death's fish-creel we wail Tam Samson dead! | salmon well known supple pikes |
| Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a'; Ye cootie moorcocks, crouselly craw; | whirring partridges feathery-legged boldly |

streets and lanes, the houses of which were small, and mostly covered with thatch; the population was not much above 3000, and the carpet-weaving brought about £20,000 annually into the place. Now, Kilmarnock is a well-built town of about 25,000 inhabitants, carrying on the carpet manufacture, according to calculations made in 1885, to the amount of about £120,000 annually, and the manufacture of shawls (which has now, however, greatly declined); while the trade in leather and its manufactured products has also made a steady advance, and there are extensive foundries and engineering works. Kilmarnock is the centre of a rich mineral field. The accompanying plate gives a view of the market-cross and its surroundings. The spectator looks southward along a handsome street, through which proceeds the road to Ayr. A conspicuous shop on the left-hand side of the opening of this street, now (1885) occupied by

Mr. M'Kie, bookseller, was formerly in the possession of John Wilson, the printer and publisher of the first edition of Burns's poems. The office in which the poems were printed is in a lane to the left. In a narrow street to the right appear the church and steeple of the *Laigh Kirk* (low church), mentioned in the poem entitled the "Ordination." To the right of the opening of this street we have what was the shop of the famous "Tam Samson."

¹ These, as well as *cock*, above, are technical terms in the game of curling. *Wick* is defined by Burns himself as "to strike a stone in an oblique direction."

² *Rink*, the course of the curling-stones, or the area set apart for the game on the ice.

³ *Hog-score*, a kind of distance line, in curling, drawn across the *rink*. The game itself, which is still a great favourite in Scotland, is briefly described in a note to the "Vision," see p. 111.

Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
 Withouten dread;
 Your mortal fae is now awa':
 Tam Samson's dead!

hares scut finely

foe

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
 Saw him in shootin' graith adorn'd,
 While pointers round impatient burn'd
 Frae couples freed;
 But, och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
 Tam Samson's dead!

accoutrements

from

went

In vain auld age his body batters;
 In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
 In vain the burns cam down like waters,
 An acre braid!
 Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin', clatters,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

brooks rivers

broad

weeping converses

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
 An' aye the tither shot he thumpit,
 Till coward death behind him jumpit,
 Wi' deadly feide;
 Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
 Tam Samson's dead.

bog-hole

other

feud

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
 He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
 But yet he drew the mortal trigger
 Wi' weel aim'd heed;
 "L—d, five!" he cried, an' owre did stagger:
 Tam Samson's dead!

over

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
 Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
 Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
 Marks out his head,
 Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

each

nonsense

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
 Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
 Some spitefu' moorfowl bigs her nest,
 To hatch an' breed;
 Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
 Tam Samson's dead!

builds

no more

When August winds the heather wave,
 And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
 Three volleys let his mem'ry crave,
 O' pouter an' lead,

powder

Till Echo answer frae her cave, from
 "Tam Samson's dead!"
 Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
 Is th' wish o' mony mae than me: many more
 He had twa fauts, or may be three;
 Yet what remead?
 Ae social, honest man want we: one
 Tam Samson's dead!

THE EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,
 Ye canting zealots, spare him!
 If honest worth in heaven rise,
 Ye'll mend or ye win near him. ere get

PER CONTRA.

Go, fame, an' canter like a filly
 Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie,¹
 Tell ev'ry social, honest billie fellow
 To cease his grievin',
 For yet, unscath'd by Death's gleg gullie, sharp knife
 Tam Samson's livin'.²

EPISTLE TO MAJOR W. LOGAN.³

Hail, thairm-inspirin', rattlin' Willie! cat-gut-
 Though fortune's road be rough an' hilly
 To every fiddling, rhyming billie, fellow
 We never heed,
 But tak it like the unback'd filly,
 Proud o' her speed.
 When idly goavin whyles we saunter; staring aimlessly sometimes
 Yirr! fancy barks, awa' we canter,
 Up hill, down brae, till some mishanter, mischance
 Some black bog-hole,
 Arrests us, then the scathe an' banter,
 We're forc'd to thole. bear

¹ *Killie* is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for the name of a certain town in the west [Kilmarnock.]—R. B.

² Burns, it is said, recited the elegy to the worthy old sportsman whose name it bears. He exclaimed vigorously against being thus prematurely conveyed to the tomb. The poet, willing to gratify the veteran old sportsman, retired to the window and added the *per contra*.

³ Major Logan was a retired military officer, who resided at Parkhouse, near Ayr, with his mother and sister, both of whom are alluded to in the last verse but one of the epistle. The major was a distinguished player on the fiddle, and also noted for his wit and humour. The poet had been a visitor at Parkhouse. The above epistle was discovered in 1828, in an old cabinet among the major's papers.

Hale be your heart! hale be your fiddle!
 Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle, elbow jerk and shake
 To cheer you through the weary widdle struggle
 O' this wild warl',
 Until you on a crummock driddle crook-headed stick walk feebly
 A grey-hair'd carle.¹

Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon, poverty
 Heav'n send your heart-strings aye in tune,
 And screw your temper-pins aboon, above
 A fifth or mair,
 The melancholious, lazy croon moan
 O' cankrie care!

May still your life from day to day
 Nae 'lente largo' in the play,
 But 'allegretto forte' gay
 Harmonious flow:
 A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey— bold
 Encore! Bravo!

A blessing on the cheery gang,
 Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
 An' never think o' right an' wrang
 By square an' rule,
 But as the clegs o' feeling stang gad-flies sting
 Are wise or fool!

My hand-wal'd curse keep hard in chase hand-picked
 The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race, miserly
 Wha count on poortith as disgrace— poverty
 Their tuneless hearts!
 May fireside discords jar a bass
 To a' their parts!

But come—your hand, my careless brither—
 P' th' ither warl', if there's anither— other world
 An' that there is, I've little swither hesitatiou
 About the matter,
 We cheek for chow shall jog thegither, jowl together
 I'se ne'er bid better. I shall ask for

We've faults and failings—granted clearly,
 We're frail backsliding mortals merely,
 Eve's bonnie squad, priests wyte them sheerly, blame
 For our grand fa';
 But still—but still—I like them dearly—
 God bless them a'!

Ochon! for poor Castalian drinkers,
 When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers, deceivers

¹ This stanza is almost identical with one in the "Second Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet." See p. 50.

Propriety's cold, cautious rules
Warm fervour may o'erlook;
But spare poor Sensibility
Th' ungentle, harsh rebuke.

A WINTER NIGHT.

In a letter to John Ballantine inclosing this piece, and dated 20th Nov. 1786, Burns writes: "Enclosed you have my first attempt in that irregular kind of measure in which many of our finest odes are wrote. How far I have succeeded I don't know, but I shall be happy to have your opinion."

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?—

SHAKESPEARE.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| When biting Boreas, fell and doure, | sullen |
| Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bower; | |
| When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glower | glance |
| Far south the lift, | sky |
| Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky shower, | |
| Or whirling drift: | |
| | |
| Ae night the storm the steeples rocked, | one |
| Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked, | |
| While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked, | brooks |
| Wild-eddying swirl, | |
| Or thro' the mining outlet bocked, | vomited |
| Down headlong hur! ² | |
| | |
| List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle, | windows |
| I thought me on the ourie cattle, | shivering |
| Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle | short contest |
| O' winter war, | |
| And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle, | sinking scramble |
| Beneath a scaur. | a cliff |

topic as unfit for discussion in the family circle, firmly refused to listen to the poet's remarks. On the 13th November, 1786, Burns sent a letter addressed to the eldest son of the house, accompanied by Ossian's poems and a volume of songs. On opening the latter volume, the above fragment in the bard's handwriting was discovered. Mrs. Lawrie is said to have looked on the lines as a mild expostulation for her putting a rather peremptory close to this conversation.

¹ "Who can read these lines without beholding the dun and labouring gloom with all its adjuncts before his eyes? The few circumstances exhibited are marked with a strength, and preferred with a judgment which

rouse the activity of the mind, and introduce whatever association can supply."—PROFESSOR WALKER.

² Wide o'er the brim with many a torrent swell'd
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread
At last the housed-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild
Tumbling o'er rocks abrupt and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads
Calm, sluggish, silent: till again constrained
Between two meeting hills it bursts away
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There gathering triple force, rapid and deep
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

—THOMSON'S *Winter*.

Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
 With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
 The powers you proudly own?
 Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
 Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
 To bless himself alone?
 Mark maiden-innocence a prey
 To love-pretending snares,
 This boasted Honour turns away,
 Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
 Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
 Perhaps, this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
 She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
 And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"Oh ye! who sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
 Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
 Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
 Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
 While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
 Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drift heap;
 Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
 Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
 Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
 But shall thy legal rage pursue
 The wretch, already crushèd low
 By cruel fortune's undeserved blow?
 Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw,
 And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crew.

powdery

But deep this truth impress'd my mind —
 Thro' all his works abroad,
 The heart, benevolent and kind,
 The most resembles God.¹

¹"The 'Winter Night,' like the 'Brigs,' sets out with description very powerfully executed, and in language decidedly Scotch, but it passes abruptly to English, and in my apprehension, to a tone more nearly within the compass of an ordinary poet. . . . It has always appeared to me that we might conceive the two different portions of this poem to be the work of different authors, or of the same author at hours when the tide of inspiration had risen to very unequal heights. Other writers are no doubt liable to

similar inequalities; but in Burns they were greater, from the superior vehemence and proportional remission of feeling, under the pressure of which he was urged to composition. When a subject ceased to interest him strongly, it was abandoned for a new one which possessed this power; and when he did not write with all the *visida vis animi*, he was apt to let the vigour of his conceptions relax with the vivacity of his emotions."—PROFESSOR WALKER.—See also Prof. Wilson's Essay in vol. v.

SONG—YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.¹

TUNE—"Yon wild mossy mountains."

"This tune," says Burns, "is Oswald's. [It appears under the name of "Phebe" in Oswald's fourth volume.] "The song alludes to a part of my private history, which is of no consequence to the world to know."

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Yon wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide, | so |
| That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde, | |
| Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed, | |
| And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed. | tends |
| Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny shores, | |
| To me hae the charms o' yon wild mossy moors; | have |
| For there, by a lanely, sequester'd clear stream, | lonely |
| Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream. | |
| Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path, | those |
| Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath; | every valley |
| For there, wi' my lassie, the day lang I rove, | |
| While o'er us unheeded fly the swift hours o' love. | |
| She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair; | |
| O' nice education but sma' is her share: | |
| Her parentage humble as humble can be; | |
| But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me. | |
| To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize, | must |
| In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs? | |
| And when wit and refinement hae polished her darts, | |
| They dazzle our een, as they flee to our hearts. | eyes |
| But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling ee, | eye |
| Has lustre outshining the diamond to me; | |
| And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in her arms, | |
| O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms! | |

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

This beautiful address was composed on the poet's first visit to Edinburgh, and must have been written shortly after his arrival, as it is alluded to in a letter (dated Decr. 27, 1786) to William Chalmers within a month after that event.—See GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and towers,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet
 Sat Legislation's sov'reign powers!

¹ Stenhouse leads us to infer that Highland Mary is the theme of the song; but it has been suggested by Allan Cunningham that the heroine is probably "Nannie." From the locality assigned to the subject of the song (the upland region where the Clyde has its early course), and the mystery of the note, we are inclined to think that the heroine was a different personage altogether from any whom he has elsewhere celebrated. It is really, however, "of no consequence to the world to know."

¹ Allusion is here made to the heroine of the poem, the daughter of Lord Monmouth, who at the time of the Revolution of 1745 was in Edinburgh, and who died in 1746. The address was composed by Burns in 1786, and was composed with the intention with native

From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labours plies;
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina! social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to Sorrow's wail,
Or modest Merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn!
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!
Fair Burnett' strikes th' adoring eye,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine,
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine!

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold veteran, gray in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock;
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd the invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,²

¹Allusion is here made to Elizabeth Burnett, daughter of Lord Monboddo, a young lady of surpassing beauty, who at this time formed the charm and ornament of Edinburgh society. Mrs. Alison Cockburn, authoress of "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling," and who died in 1794, wrote about the time this address was composed:—"The town is at present all agog with the 'Ploughman Poet,' who receives adulation with native dignity, and is the very figure of his

profession, strong, but coarse; yet he has a most enthusiastic heart of love. He has seen Duchess Gordon and all the gay world. His favourite, for looks and manners, is Bess Burnett—no bad judge, indeed!" We shall have occasion to speak farther of her when we come to the elegy which the poet wrote on her death, in 1790.

²This refers to Holyrood Palace, *dome* being here used (as by Pope) in the general sense of edifice.

Where Scotia's kings of other years,
 Fam'd heroes! had their royal home:
 Alas! how chang'd the times to come!
 Their royal name low in the dust!
 Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam,
 Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
 Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
 Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
 Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
 Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
 Haply my sires have left their shed,
 And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,
 Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet
 Sat Legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the fing'ring hours
 I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

TO A HAGGIS.¹

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face, | befall | comely |
| Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race! | | |
| Aboon them a' ye tak your place, | above | |
| Painch, tripe, or thairm: | paunch | small intestine |
| Weel are ye wordy of a grace | worthy | |
| As lang's my arm. | | |

¹ A haggis is a pudding, supposed to be peculiar to Scotland, composed of the minced heart, liver, &c., of a sheep, mixed with oatmeal and suet, seasoned with salt, pepper, &c., and boiled in the carefully cleaned stomach of the animal. The poet's description of this phenomenon in cookery is faithful as it is graphic. Its appearance is very apt to startle an Englishman, however bold he may be as a trencher-man: but by a Scotsman, who knows its intrinsic worth, and honours the country to which it belongs, it is always welcomed at table with hearty applause. Formerly, in Burns's time, and before it, when the style of living in Scotland was simpler and humbler than it now is, the Haggis was one of the principal luxuries of the farmer and labouring man, and the poet's description of the enthusiasm with which it was devoured is not overcharged. At the present day, however, it forms a much less prominent figure in rustic dietetics, though it has still

its patrons in town as well as in country. There are different accounts as to the composition of the poem, but it first appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* on the 20th December, 1786, subsequently in the *Scots Magazine* for January, 1787, and was reprinted in that year's edition of the poet's works. The concluding verse originally stood thus:—

Ye powers, wha gie us a' that's gude,
 Still bless auld Caledonia's brood,
 Wl' great John Barleycorn's heart's-blude
 In stoups or luggies,
 And on our board, that king o' food,
 A glorious Haggis!

Burns, it is said, repeated something like this when asked to say grace at a table where a haggis formed a prominent part of the entertainment, and so well was his extemporaneous address received, that he was induced to extend it as above.

¹ A wooden sk
 in the bag is firr
² The spoons
 farmers and far

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
 Your hurdies like a distant hill,
 Your pin¹ wad help to mend a mill
 In time o' need,
 While thro' your pores the dews distil
 Like amber bead.

thighs
 would

His knife see rustic labour dight,
 An' cut you up with ready slight,
 Trenching your gushing entrails bright
 Like ony ditch;
 And then, O what a glorious sight,
 Warm-reekin', rich!

wipe
 skill

Then horn² for horn they stretch an' strive,
 Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
 Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes belyve
 Are bent like drums;
 Then auld guidman, 'maist like to ryve,
 'Bethankit' hums.

swelled bellies by and by

paterfamilias burst
 the grace

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
 Or olio that wad staw a sow,
 Or fricassee wad mak her spew
 Wi' perfect scunner,
 Looks down wi' sneerin', scornfu' view
 On sic a dinner?

would surfeit

disgust

such

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
 As feckless as a wither'd rash,
 His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
 His nieve a nit;
 Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
 O how unfit!

pithless rush

fist nut

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
 The trembling earth resounds his tread,
 Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
 He'll mak it whistle;
 An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
 Like taps o' thrissle.

mighty fist

lop

thistle

Ye pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill o' fare,
 Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
 That jaups in luggies;³
 But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
 Gie her a Haggis!

watery stuff

splashes wooden dishes

¹ A wooden skewer by means of which the opening in the bag is firmly closed up.

² The spoons formerly used at the tables of the farmers and farm-labourers, and others in a similar

station of life, were made of horn; and indeed such spoons may be met with yet.

³ Wooden dishes resembling small tubs, being made of staves and hoops with ear-shaped handles.

ill comely

ve
 nch small intestine
 thy

country. There are
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at's gude,
 brood,
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hing like this when
 ere a haggis formed
 inment, and so well
 eceived, that he was

TO MISS LOGAN,¹

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS AS A NEW YEAR'S GIFT, JANUARY 1, 1787.

Again the silent wheels of time
 Their annual round have driven,
 And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
 Are so much nearer Heaven.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
 The infant year to hail;
 I send you more than India boasts,
 In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
 Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
 But may, dear maid, each lover prove
 An Edwin still to you!

EXTEMPORE IN THE COURT OF SESSION.²

TUNE—"Killicrankie."

THE LORD ADVOCATE.

He clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
 He quoted and he hinted,
 Till in a declamation-mist,
 His argument he tint it:
 He gapèd for't, he grapèd for't,
 He fand it was awa, man;
 But what his common sense came short,
 He ekèd out wi' law, man.

lost
 groped
 found

MR. ERSKINE.

Collected, Harry stood a wee,
 Then open'd out his arm, man;
 His lordship sat wi' ruefu' èe,
 And ey'd the gathering storm, man:
 Like wind-driv'n hail it did assail,
 Or torrents owre a linn, man;
 The Bench sae wise lift up their eyes,
 Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

a short time
 eye
 over a rock

¹Miss Logan was the "sentimental sister Susie," of Major Logan, to whom the epistle in a preceding page is addressed.

²Mr. Hay Campbell, afterwards Lord President, was then Lord Advocate. Mr. Erskine (Harry Erskine) was Dean of Faculty.

¹ This, with s
 into an uncom
² William Sn
 partners at th
 burgh. He wa
 printer, and h
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 To give some id
 tioned that he
 himself to corr
 that language
 employers! Sn
 allan Fencibles
 club of literar
 in Edinburgh.
 burden of a Ge
 sing. Smellie

ON WILLIAM SMELLIE.¹

AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL HISTORY."

Shrewd Willie Smellie² to Crochallan came,
 The old cock'd hat, the gray surtout, the same;
 His bristling beard just rising in its might,
 'Twas four long nights and days to shaving-night—
 His uncombed grizzly locks wild scaring, thatch'd
 A head for thought profound and clear unmatch'd;
 Yet tho' his caustic wit was biting, rude,
 His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMBSTONE OF FERGUSSON.

HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,

BORN, SEPTEMBER 5TH, 1751. DIED, 16TH OCTOBER, 1774

No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
 "No storied urn nor animated bust,"³
 This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
 To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.

ADDITIONAL STANZAS.⁴

She mourns, sweet tuneful youth, thy hapless fate.
 Tho' all the powers of song thy fancy fir'd,
 Yet Luxury and Wealth lay by in state,
 And thankless starv'd what they so much admir'd.

This humble tribute with a tear he gives,
 A brother Bard, he can no more bestow:
 But dear to fame thy Song immortal lives,
 A nobler monument than Art can show.

¹ This, with some trifling variations, was introduced into an uncompleted poem "The Poet's Progress."

² William Smellie was one of the printer Creech's partners at the time of Burns's residence in Edinburgh. He was born in 1740 and originally bred a printer, and his sterling integrity and habits of invincible application raised him to a distinguished rank in his profession, and in the republic of letters. To give some idea of his perseverance, it may be mentioned that he studied Hebrew, in order to qualify himself to correct the proof-sheets of a grammar of that language which was about to be printed by his employers! Smellie died in June, 1795. The "Crochallan Fencibles," alluded to in the first line, was a club of literary wits which met weekly in a tavern in Edinburgh. They assumed the name from the burden of a Gaelic song which the landlord used to sing. Smellie was a fellow of the Royal Society, and

secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. He translated Buffon's *Natural History* into English, and planned, compiled, and superintended the first edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1771, 3 vols.).

³ Gray's "Elegy."

⁴ The two additional stanzas were first published in the Globe edition of *Burns's Works* (Macmillan & Co.), edited by Alexander Smith. They appear in the Edinburgh Common-place Book.—On the 6th February, 1787, Burns petitioned the Managers of the Kirk and Kirkyard Funds of the Parish of Canongate as follows: "To the honourable Bailies of Canongate, Edinburgh.—Gentlemen, I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents for ages to come will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your churchyard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown. Some memorial to direct the steps of

VERSES

WRITTEN UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF ROBERT FERGUSSON, IN A COPY OF HIS WORKS
PRESENTED TO A YOUNG LADY, MARCH 19, 1787.¹

Curse on ungrateful man, that can be pleas'd,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!
O thou my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

TO MRS. SCOTT OF WAUCHOPE.

GUIDWIFE,

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| I mind it weel, in early date, | remember |
| When I was beardless, young, and blate, | bashful |
| An' first could thrash the barn; | |
| Or haud a yokin' at the pleugh, | hold |
| An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh, | exhausted |
| Yet unco proud to learn; | extremely |
| When first amang the yellow corn | |
| A man I reckon'd was, | |
| An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn | rust every |
| Could rank my rig and lass, | ridge |
| Still shearing, and clearing | |
| The tither stookèd raw, | row |
| Wi' claivers, an' haivers, | idle talk nonsense |
| Wearing the day awa,— | |

the lovers of Scottish song when they wish to shed a tear over the 'narrow house' of the bard who is no more is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory—a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying. I petition you then, gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame." On the 22d of February at a meeting of the managers the petition was read and unanimously granted, and on the reverse side of the stone the following words were engraved: "By special grant of the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson." Referring to this last clause Chambers remarks, "If this order of the managers was designed to set aside the ground from all future use as a part of the general place of sepulture, I am sorry to remark that it has been, through inadver-

tence in some quarter, violated, as I was present some years ago, when the remains of Mr. John Inverarity, a nephew of Fergusson, were deposited in the grave of the poet."

¹ This was written immediately after the poet had obtained permission from the Managers of the Kirk and Kirkyard Funds of Canongate "to erect a headstone at the grave of Fergusson." The "curse" had been previously more forcibly and pointedly launched in the epistle to William Simson, vol. i. p. 256:

My curse upon your whunstone hearts,
Ye Enbrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes,
Wad stow'd his pantry!

But Fergusson was more the victim of misfortune than of the hard-heartedness and callousness of mankind.

¹ The reader incomplete, being wanted

² "He is h without em nature and y that this extr stirrings of i shadowed ot 'blind gropi of his cave.'

³ "You kn and woman

E'en then a wish—I mind its power—
 A wish, that to my latest hour
 Shall strongly heave my breast,
 That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
 Some usefu' plan, or book could make,
 Or sing a sang at least.¹
 The rough burr-thistle, spreading wide
 Among the bearded bear,
 I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
 An' spar'd the symbol dear;²
 No nation, no station,
 My envy e'er could raise,
 A Scot still, but blot still,
 I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
 In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
 Wild floated in my brain:
 Till on that har'st I said before,
 My partner in the merry corps,
 She rous'd the forming strain:
 I see her yet, the sonsie quean,
 That lighted up my jingle,
 Her witching smile, her pauky een
 That gart my heart-strings tingle;
 I firèd, inspirèd,
 At ev'ry kindling keek,
 But bashing, and dashing,
 I fearèd aye to speak.³

Health to the sex! ilk guid chiel says,
 Wi' merry dance in winter-days,
 An' we to share in common:
 The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
 The saul o' life, the heav'n below,
 Is rapture-giving woman.
 Ye surly sumpsh, who hate the name,
 Be mindfu' o' your mither:

¹ The reader will notice that this long sentence is incomplete, a verb, or expression containing a verb, being wanted to give full sense.

² "He is hardly to be envied who can contemplate without emotion this exquisite picture of young nature and young genius. It was amidst such scenes that this extraordinary being felt those first indefinite stirrings of immortal ambition, which he has himself shadowed out under the magnificent image of the 'blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops around the walls of his cave.'"—J. G. LOCKHART.

³ "You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of

harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, who just counted an autumn less. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a *bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass*. . . . In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into a certain delicious passion. . . . How she caught the contagion I can't say, . . . but I never expressly told her that I loved her."—BURNS'S *Autobiographical Letter to Dr. Moore*.—The girl's name was Nellie Kilpatrick; she was the heroine of the song "Handsome Nell," the first known composition of the poet. See vol. i. p. 189.

WORKS

remember
bashfulhold
exhausted
extremelyrest every
ridgerow
idle talk nonsenses I was present some
fr. John Inverarity,
positioned in the graveafter the poet had
anagers of the Kirk
te "to erect a head-
The "curse" had
pointedly launched
vol. i. p. 256:tane hearts,
h gentry!
at cartes,
his pantry!ctim of misfortune
callousness of man-

She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her.

Ye're wae men, ye're nae men,
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

poor

each gallant

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line.

cow-house

The marled plaid ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;

checkered (or mottled)

worn

'Twad please me to the nine.

I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,

proud wrap

Douce hingin' o'er my curple,

modestly crupper

Than ony ermine ever lap,

leaped

Or proud imperial purple.

Fareweel then, lang heal then,

health

An' plenty be your fa':

lot

May losses and crosses

Ne'er at your hallan ca'.¹

door

ROBERT BURNS.

¹ Mrs. Scott of Wauchope, near Jedburgh, in Roxburghshire, a painter and a poetess, addressed a rhyming epistle to Burns, entitled, "The Guidwife of Wauchope-house to Robert Burns," expressing her admiration of his poems, and her doubts as to the correctness of the report, that they were the production of a ploughman. But it may be as well to let her tell her own tale, and thus afford a specimen of her poetic powers:—

My canty, witty, rhyming ploughman,
I haflins doubt it is na true, man,
That ye between the stilts were bred,
Wi' ploughmen school'd, wi' ploughmen fed.
I doubt it sair, ye've drawn your knowledge
Either frae grammar-school or college.
Guid troth, your saul and body baith
War better fed, I'd gie my aith,
Than theirs, who sup sour-milk and parritch,
An' bumml thro' the Single Carritch.
Wha ever heard the ploughman speak,
Could tell gif Homer was a Greek?
He'd flee as soon upon a cudgel,
As get a single lint of Virgil.
An' then sae slee ye crack your jokes
O' Willie Pitt, and Charlie Fox,
Our great men a' sae weel describe,
An' how to gar the nation thrive,
Ane maist wad swear ye dwalt among them,
An' as ye saw them, sae ye sang them.
But be ye ploughman, be ye peer,
Ye are a funny blade, I swear;
An' though the cauld I ill can bide,
Yet twenty miles, an' mair, I'd ride,
O'er moss, an' muir, an' never grumble,
Tho' my auld yad shou'd gie a stumble,
To crack a winter-night wi' thee,
And hear thy sangs and sonnets slee.

good-humoured

half

plough-shafts

greatly

oath

Shorter Catechism

sly

describe

make

jade

chat

A guid saut herring, an' a cake,
Wi' sic a chiel, a feast wad make;
I'd rather scour your reaming yill,
Or eat o' cheese and bread my fill,
Than wi' dull lairds on turtle dine,
An' ferlie at their wit and wine.
O, gif I kenn'd but whare ye baide,
I'd send to you a marled plaid;
'Twad haud your shoulders warm and braw,
An' douce at kirk or market shaw.
For south, as weel as north, my lad,
A' honest Scotchmen lo'e the maud,
Right wae that we're sae far frae ither:
Yet proud I am to ca' ye brither.

fellow

creaming ale

wonder

resided

checkered

respectable

shepherd's plaid

Burns immediately answered her epistle by addressing to her the above poem. In his Border tour he visited Wauchope: regarding its inmates we find the following entry in his journal—"Wauchope—Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Panza—very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face and bold critical decision, which usually distinguish female authors." Of a certain Mrs. Fall, also encountered on his Border tour, he remarks—"Fully more clever in the fine arts and sciences than my friend Lady Wauchope, without her consummate assurance of her own abilities." (See vol. i. pp. 177 and 179.) Mrs. Scott's maiden name was Elizabeth Rutherford, and she was niece to Mrs. Cockburn (quoted in reference to Burns on p. 197 above), authoress of the favourite song, "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling," also known as the "Flowers of the Forest."

¹ Mr. Woodwell as to Burn Edinburgh, and was born in 17 and died in D

² Thomas R. Edinburgh.

³ The histor

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODS ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT,¹ MONDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1787.

When by a generous Public's kind acclaim,
That dearest need is granted—honest fame:
When here your favour is the actor's lot,
Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heav'nly virtue's glow,
But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous throng,
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song;
But here an ancient nation fam'd afar,
For genius, learning high, as great in war—
Hail! Caledonia! name for ever dear,
Before whose sons I'm honour'd to appear!
Where every science—every nobler art—
That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
Is known; as grateful nations oft have found,
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
Philosophy,² no idle, pedant dream,
Here holds her search by heaven-taught Reason's beam;
Here History³ paints with elegance and force,
The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
Here Douglas⁴ forms wild Shakespeare into plan,
And Harley⁵ rouses all the God in man.
When well-form'd taste, and sparkling wit, unite
With manly lore, or female beauty bright,
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace,
Can only charm us in the second place.)
Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
As on this night, I've met these judges here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live,
Equal to judge—you're candid to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With Decency and Law beneath his feet;
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
Like Caledonians, you applaud or blame.

O Thou, dread Power! whose empire-giving hand
Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honour'd land!

¹ Mr. Woods was known to Fergusson the poet, as well as to Burns. He was long a popular actor in Edinburgh, and was styled the *Scottish Roscius*. He was born in 1751, retired from the stage in April, 1802, and died in December of the same year.

² Thomas Reid at Glasgow, and Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh.

³ The historians Hume and Robertson.

⁴ Home's tragedy of *Douglas*.—"In April in course of a prologue for the benefit of the veteran Scotch Roscius (Mr. Woods) Burns, after referring to Hume, Robertson, and Reid, as glories of Caledonia, perpetrated his worst criticism—

Here Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plan."

—PROFESSOR NICHOL.

⁵ Henry Mackenzie in *The Man of Feeling*.

Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire!
 May every son be worthy of his sire!
 Firm may she rise with generous disdain
 At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's chain!
 Still Self-dependent in her native shore,
 Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
 Till Fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no more.

 VERSES

 INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN BENEATH A NOBLE EARL'S PICTURE.¹

Whose is that noble, dauntless brow?
 And whose that eye of fire?
 And whose that generous princely mien
 E'en rooted foes admire?

Stranger! to justly show that brow,
 And mark that eye of fire,
 Would take His hand whose vernal tints
 His other works admire.

Bright as a cloudless summer sun
 With stately port he moves;
 His guardian Seraph eyes with awe
 The noble Ward he loves.

Among the illustrious Scottish sons
 That Chief thou mayst discern;
 Mark Scotia's fond returning eye,
 It dwells upon Glencairn.

 SONG—MY LADY'S GOWN THERE'S GAIRS UPON'T.²

TUNE—"Gregg's Pipes."

My lady's gown there's gairs upon't,
 And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;

inserted pieces
 golden

¹The "noble earl" is the Earl of Glencairn, one of the poet's most serviceable patrons. (See note to the "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn," also letters in vol. iv., in which is given a portrait of this nobleman.) The above verses are more inspired by gratitude than by the Muse. The earl refused the poet's request for liberty to print them, and they first appeared in Cunningham's edition of 1839. Cunningham suggests that the word "admire" closing the second stanza is a slip of the pen for "inspire."

²"This song," says Stenhouse, "was written for the *Museum* in 1788. . . . Johnson long hesitated to admit it, . . . but being blamed for such fastidiousness he at length gave it a place." It appears in the sixth volume, adapted to a reel tune composed by James Gregg, a dancing master and musical composer of some local eminence in his day in Ayrshire, who died at a good old age in 1817.—The stanza which serves as a chorus seems older than Burns's time; perhaps the whole is after an old model.

¹The date of copy of it earl's opinion of it

But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair upon't.

stays bodice

My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane,
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

My lady's gown, &c.

My lady's white, my lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassillis' blude,
But her ten-pund lands o' tocher guid,
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

dower

My lady's gown, &c.

Out o'er yon moor, out o'er yon moss,
Whare gor-cocks thro' the heather pass,
There wons auld Colin's bonnie lass,
A lily in a wilderness!

grouse
dwells

My lady's gown, &c.

Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music-notes o' lovers' hymns:
The diamond dew in her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

elegant

eyes

My lady's gown, &c.

My lady's dink, my lady's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
O, that's the lass to make him blest.

neat

My lady's gown, &c.

HUNTING SONG—THE BONNIE MOOR-HEN.¹

TUNE—"I rede you beware at the hunting."

The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a-hunting ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses, and mony a glen,
At length they discover'd a bonnie moor-hen.

went one

I rede ye beware at the hunting, young men;
I rede ye beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonnie moor-hen.

warn

quietly

¹ The date of this song is uncertain. Burns sent a copy of it early in 1788 to Clarinda, who expresses her opinion of it in a letter of 6th February, thus: "Do not publish the 'Moor-hen'; do not, for your sake and for mine." It was found among the loose MSS. handed by Mrs. Burns to Cromek.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells;
Her plumage outlustr'd the pride o' the spring,
And O! as she wanton'd sae gay on the wing.

I rede ye, &c.

Auld Phœbus himsel', as he peep'd o'er the hill,
In spite, at her plumage, he trièd his skill;
He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae— slope
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.

I rede ye, &c.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
The best o' our lads, wi' the best o' our skill;
But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over a mile at a flight.

I rede ye, &c.

EPIGRAM ON AN ARTIST.¹

Dear —, I'll gie ye some advice,
You'll tak it no uncivil:
You shouldna paint at angels mair,
But try and paint the devil.
To paint an angel's kittle wark, ticklish
Wi' Nick there's little danger:
You'll easy draw a lang-kent face,
But no sae weel a *stranger*.

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO THE LANDLADY OF THE INN AT ROSSLYN.²

My blessings on you, sonsy wife; comely
I ne'er was here before; ^
You've gi'en us walth for horn and knife, plenty spoon
Nae heart could wish for more.

Heav'n keep you free frae care and strife,
Till far ayont fourscore; beyond
And while I toddle on through life,
I'll ne'er gang by your door.

¹ According to Robert Chambers, Burns was on one occasion introduced to a celebrated Edinburgh artist in his studio; the painter was at the time engaged on a picture, the subject of which was Jacob's Dream. After a minute inspection of the painting the poet wrote the above lines on the back of a little sketch which is still preserved in the painter's family. Cham-

bers refrains from satisfying our curiosity as to the name of the artist.

² Where Burns is said, after a walk to the Pentland Hills, with Alexander Nasmyth, portrait-painter, to have breakfasted so much to his satisfaction that he presented his hostess with these lines, scratched on the back of a wooden platter.

EPIGRAM ON ELPHINSTONE'S TRANSLATION

OF MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS.

To Clarinda in 1787 Burns wrote:—"Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr. Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet? The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose-notes. I was sitting in a merchant's shop of my acquaintance, waiting for somebody: he put Elphinstone into my hand, and asked my opinion of it: I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did."

O thou whom Poetry abhors,
Whom Prose has turnèd out of doors,
Heard'st thou that groan—proceed no further,
'Twas laurell'd Martial roaring murthe

EPIGRAM—THE BOOKWORMS.¹

Through and through the inspirèd leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But, Oh! respect his lordship's taste,
And spare his golden bindings.

EPIGRAM ON MISS BURNS.²

Cease, ye prudes, your envious railing;
Lovely Burns has charms—confess!
True it is, she has one failing—
Had a woman ever less?

EPITAPH ON THE SCHOOLMASTER OF CLEISH PARISH,

FIFESHIRE.³

Here lie Willie Michie's banes,
O Satan! when ye tak him,
Gie him the schoolin' o' your weans; children
For clever Deils he'll mak them!

¹ Burns, it is said, calling one day on a nobleman, was shown into the library. Being kept waiting, he had time to inspect his lordship's collection. Among the rest was a splendidly-bound copy of Shakspeare, little used and much worm-eaten. Burns rashly wrote on the blank leaf of one of the volumes the above epigram, which was found long after the poet's death, by some one accidentally attracted, perhaps, to the same neglected volume.

² Miss Burns was a well-known frail one in Edinburgh during the poet's residence there. She was noted for her personal attractions. We shall have to speak of her further when we come to the Correspondence.

³ Burns probably crossed the Forth occasionally during his first stay in Edinburgh, and may have met and admired the Cleish schoolmaster whose cleverness he here celebrates.

POETICAL ADDRESS TO MR. WILLIAM TYTLER,¹

AUTHOR OF "AN INQUIRY, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL, INTO THE EVIDENCE AGAINST MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS."

WITH A PRESENT OF THE BARD'S PICTURE.

Reverèd defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,
A name, which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected.

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,²
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal.

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.³

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry;
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us the Hanover stem;
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I'm sure 'twas as lucky for them!⁴

But, loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine, to-day, that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

¹ William Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee, was a member of the society of Writers to the Signet, and besides being author of the above-mentioned work in favour of Queen Mary, wrote various other dissertations and essays, and edited the *Poetical Remains of James I. of Scotland*. He was born in 1711, and died 12th Sept. 1792. His son was the well-known Lord Woodhouselee, and his grandson, Patrick Fraser Tytler, was author of the well-known and excellent history of Scotland, published in 1828-43.

² "In May, writing to Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee on the Vindication of Mary Stuart, [Burns perpetrated] his worst lines,—

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal."

—PROFESSOR NICHOL.

³ The question as to whether any of Burns's fathers had been concerned in the Stuart cause is discussed in a note on "The Paternal Ancestry of Burns" appended to Lockhart's *Life*. That any of them fell in the cause seems to be mere speculation on Burns's part.

⁴ It strongly marks the cautious spirit of the times, that Dr. Currie omitted the three last lines of this stanza from his edition of the poet's works. Burns felt when he wrote it that he was treading on dangerous ground. A jest on royalty was then regarded as an unerring proof of disaffection to government, and the peccant author as a legitimate mark for the bolts of authority. These prejudices were strengthened by the progress of events ere the piece passed under the editorial hands of Currie. He paused—and deemed it better to expunge the verse than to subject himself, as well as the author, to the withering charge of disloyalty.

EPIS

¹ The "Bard generally untrait by an ar in Edinburgh was a present was, at the t Dr. David La ² Miss Ainslie's burgh friends a trip to the s in the course Ainslie's pare i. p. 176.) O church at Dun man (Dr. Bow

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,

That was a law:

We've lost a birkie weel-worth gowd—

Willie's awa!

fellow gold

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools,

In glen or shaw;

He wha could brush them down to mools,

Willie's awa!

silly girls simpletons

toad-stools

wood

the dust

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer¹
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;

He was a dictionar and grammar

Among them a';

I fear they'll now make mony a stammer—

Willie's awa!

mournful

blunder

Nae mair we see his levee door

Philosophers and Poets pour,²

And toothy critics by the score,

In bloody raw!

The adjutant o' a' the core,

Willie's awa!

row

corps

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace;
Mackenzie, Stewart, such a brace

As Rome ne'er saw;³

They a' maun meet some ither place,

Willie's awa!

must other

Poor Burns e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,

He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken,

Scar'd frae its minnie and the cleckin'

By hoodie-craw;

Grief's gi'en his heart an unco kickin',

Willie's awa!

chirps

mother brood

severe

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girnin' blellum,

And Calvin's folk are fit to fell him;

fretting noisy talker

¹ The Chamber of Commerce of Edinburgh, of which Mr. Creech was secretary.—R. B.

² Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. Creech's house at breakfast.—R. B.

³ The gentlemen receiving friendly mention in this stanza were:—Dr. James Gregory, author of the *Con-*

spectus Medicinæ; Tytler of Woodhouselee, author of the *Defence of Mary Queen of Scots*; Dr. William Greenfield, professor of rhetoric in the Edinburgh University; Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*; and Dugald Stewart, professor of moral philosophy.

¹ This epistle ad-
visit to London, wa-
tour. See letter to
this piece. It may
found reason to c-
Creech's great fa-
with money. Bu-
of his poems out-
eager and unremi-
however, Creech v-
told a good story w-
much vigour, it is

And self-conceited critic skellum nobody
 His quill may draw;
 He wha could brawlie' ward their *bellum*, finely
 Willie's awa!

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
 And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
 And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
 While tempests blaw;
 But every joy and pleasure's fled—
 Willie's awa!

May I be slander's common speech;
 A text for infamy to preach;
 And lastly, streekit out to bleach stretched
 In winter snaw;
 When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
 Though far awa!

May never wicked fortune touzle him! rumple
 May never wicked men bamboozle him!
 Until a pow as auld's Methusalem head (poll)
 He canty claw! °cheerful
 Then to the blessed New Jerusalem,
 Fleet wing awa!¹

EPIGRAM WRITTEN AT INVERARY.²

Whoe'er he be that sojourns here,
 I pity much his case,
 Unless he come to wait upon
 The Lord their God, his Grace.

There's naething here but Highland pride,
 And Highland scab and hunger;
 If Providence has sent me here,
 'Twas surely in his anger.

¹ This epistle addressed to his publisher, then on a visit to London, was written by Burns during his Border tour. See letter to Creech of 13th May, 1787, inclosing this piece. It may be here stated, that Burns afterwards found reason to change his opinion of his publisher. Creech's great failing was an indisposition to part with money. Burns could hardly wring the profits of his poems out of his hands after months spent in eager and unremitting solicitation. In other respects, however, Creech was a man above the common run—told a good story with unflinching effect—wrote, without much vigour, it is true, but with considerable power

of irony, a volume since reprinted—and delighted in the society and conversation of men of letters. His shop was the lounge for all the men of talent in the Scottish capital, and his morning *conversazioni* were long remembered as "Creech's levees." Mr. Creech died 14th January, 1815, aged 70.

² This refers to some unpleasant incident of his West Highland tour in the summer of 1787. Perhaps some of the numerous visitors at the castle had to seek accommodation at the inn, and more attention might be paid to them than to the irascible, and then comparatively unknown, poet. See vol. i p. 73.

EPIGRAM ON MISS JEAN SCOTT.¹

Oh! had each Scot of ancient times,
 Been JEANIE SCOTT, as thou art;
 The bravest heart on English ground,
 Had yielded like a coward.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.²

To a copy of this piece presented to Capt. Riddell of Glenriddell Burns appended the following note: "This performance is but mediocre, but my grief was sincere. The last time I saw the worthy, public-spirited man—a man he was! how few of the two-legged breed that pass for such, deserve the designation!—he pressed my hand and asked me with the most friendly warmth if it was in his power to serve me; and if so, that I would oblige him by telling him how. I had nothing to ask of him; but if ever a child of his should be so unfortunate as to be under the necessity of asking anything of so poor a man as I am, it may not be in my power to grant it, but by G—I shall try."—See also letter of the poet to Robert Aiken, July, 1787.

The lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
 Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath the western wave;
 Th' inconstant blast how'd thro' the darkening air,
 And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
 Once the lov'd haunts of Scotia's royal train;³
 Or mus'd where limpid streams, once hallow'd, well,⁴
 Or mould'ring ruins mark the sacred fane;⁵

Th' increasing blast roar'd round the beetling rocks,
 The clouds swift-wing'd flew o'er the starry sky,
 The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
 And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
 And 'mong the cliffs disclos'd a stately form,
 In weeds of woe that frantic beat her breast,
 And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
 'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd:
 Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
 The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

¹ All that is known of Jeanie Scott is that she was a native of Ayr.

² This gentleman was a native of Ayr, and partner in the banking-house of Sir William Forbes and Company. He died 1st July, 1787, in the forty-seventh year of his age. He was Lord-provost of Edinburgh from October 1784 to October 1786. To a copy sent to his

friend, Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, Burns appended these words:—"The melancholy occasion of the foregoing poem affects not only individuals but a country."

³ The King's Park, at Holyrood-house.—R. B.

⁴ St. Anthony's Well.—R. B.

⁵ St. Anthony's Chapel.—R. B.

¹ Miss Isabel Raasay, that I Johnson and I M'Leod, had n of Rowallan, v down. She dic daughter, Flor her father's de therefore, the

Revers'd that spear, redoubtable in war;
 Reclin'd that banner, erst in fields unfur'd,
 That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
 And brav'd the mighty monarchs of the world.—

“My patriot son fills an untimely grave!”
 With accents wild and lifted arms—she cried;
 “Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save,
 Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest pride!

“A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
 The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
 The drooping Arts surround their patron's bier,
 And grateful Science heaves the heartfelt sigh.—

“I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
 I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow;
 But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
 Relentless fate has laid this guardian low.—

“My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
 While empty greatness saves a worthless name!
 No; every muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
 And future ages hear his growing fame.

“And I will join a mother's tender cares,
 Thro' future times to make his virtues last,
 That distant years may boast of other Blairs”—
 She said, and vanish'd with the sweeping blast.

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER THE DEATH OF
 JOHN M'LEOD, ESQ.,

BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY,¹ A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.

Sad thy tale, thou idle page,
 And rueful thy alarms:
 Death tears the brother of her love
 From Isabella's arms.

¹ Miss Isabella M'Leod, a daughter of the Laird of Raasay, that laird who was visited at Raasay by Dr. Johnson and Boswell. Her elder sister, Miss Flora M'Leod, had married Colonel James Mure-Campbell of Rowallan, who succeeded to the earldom of Loudoun. She died immediately after giving birth to a daughter, Flora, who became Countess of Loudoun at her father's death in 1786. Miss Isabella M'Leod was, therefore, the aunt of the young countess, and to her

and the M'Leod family Burns had been introduced by his friend Gavin Hamilton, factor for the Loudoun estate. John M'Leod died on July 20th, 1787, while Burns was residing at Mossgiel for a short time after his sojourn in Edinburgh. Burns was on an intimate footing with the M'Leods during his winter campaign in the capital, and had been much taken with Isabella. She is the subject of the song “Raving winds around her blowing.”

ER BLAIR.²

ended the following
 me I saw the worthy,
 for such, deserve the
 mth if it was in his
 had nothing to ask of
 ibility of asking any-
 y G— I shall try.”—

air,

vell,⁴

cks,
 cy,

1.

r in Ayr, Burns appended
 holy occasion of the fore-
 individuals but a coun-

wood-house.—R. B.
 B.
 R. B.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
 The morning rose may blow;
 But cold successive noontide blasts
 May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
 The sun propitious smil'd;
 But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
 Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
 That nature finest strung:
 So Isabella's heart was form'd,
 And so that heart was wrung.¹

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
 Can heal the wound he gave;
 Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
 To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
 And fear no withering blast;
 There Isabella's spotless worth
 Shall happy be at last.

TO MISS FERRIER,²

ENCLOSING THE ELEGY ON SIR J. H. BLAIR

Nae heathen name shall I prefix
 Frae Pindus or Parnassus; from
 Auld Reekie dings them a' to sticks beats
 For rhyme-inspiring lasses.

Jove's tunefu' dochters three times three daughters
 Made Homer deep their debtor;
 But, gi'en the body half an ee, eye
 Nine Ferriers wad done better! would

¹ In the original MS. after the fourth verse occurs the following lines:—

Were it in the poet's power,
 Strong as he shares the grief
 That pierces Isabella's heart
 To give that heart relief.

In Cunningham's edition of Burns these lines have been restored; the propriety of this may be questioned, as they form only part of a proposition, which would require to be completed in a new stanza. Evidently Burns deliberately sacrificed them, the poem being perfect without them.

² The Miss Ferrier here addressed was a daughter of Mr. James Ferrier, W.S., afterwards, with Sir Walter Scott, one of the principal clerks of the Court of Session. He resided in George Street, as may be inferred from the above verses. A younger sister of Miss Ferrier was Miss Susan Edmonston Ferrier, sometimes called "the Scottish Miss Edgeworth," authoress of *Marriage, The Inheritance, and Destiny*. Miss Ferrier was aunt of the subtle and brilliant metaphysician James Frederick Ferrier, professor of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, and editor of the collected works of Professor John Wilson, one of whose daughters he had married.

¹ The day Bu
 William Nicol
 Iron-works wa
 nothing remark
 ment by writin
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² Burns paid
 in August 1787
 as in former di
 roused his hal
 his feelings in
 the window of
 ever, contains
 friend is said
 impropriety of
 serting that th

Last day my mind was in a bog,
Down George's Street I stoited; walked stupidly
A creeping cauld prosaic fog
My very senses doited. benumbed

Do what I dought to set her free, could
My saul lay in the mire;
Ye turned a neuk—I saw your ee— corner
She took the wing like fire!

The mournfu' sang I here enclose,
In gratitude I send you;
And pray, in rhyme as weel as prose,
A' gude things may attend you!

EPIGRAMMATIC VERSES.¹

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE INN AT CARRON.

We cam na here to view your warks,
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only, lest we gang to hell,
It may be nae surprise;

But whan we tirl'd at your door, tapped
Your porter dought na hear us; did not choose to
Sae may, should we to hell's yetts come, gates
Your billy Satan sair us! brother serve

LINES WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS AT STIRLING.²

Here Stuarts oncè in glory reign'd,
And laws for Scotia's weal ordain'd;

¹ The day Burns and his travelling companion, Mr. William Nicol, teacher, sought admission to Carron Iron-works was Sunday, and so their exclusion was nothing remarkable. Burns expressed his disappointment by writing the above lines, in a very questionable taste and temper, with a diamond on the window-pane.

² Burns paid a visit to Stirling in his Highland tour, in August 1787. The sight of its castle, celebrated as in former times the favourite residence of royalty, roused his half-slumbering Jacobitism. He vented his feelings in the above lines, which he scratched on the window of the inn. The concluding couplet, however, contains some grossly unjust expressions. A friend is said to have pointed out to the poet the impropriety of the verses. He defended them, asserting that they were true. The other retorted, that

this might be looked on in the light of an aggravation. "Stay," said Burns, "I will reprove myself;" and immediately wrote the "Reproof," on the same pane which contained the offending verses. Some one—it has been charged on the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, the minister of Gladsmuir—expostulated with the poet for his attack on royalty in a set of verses more distinguished by their loyalty than their point or judgment. The "Reply," was written in answer to this "expostulation." In the Glenriddell MSS. a slightly different version is found with an introductory statement as follows: "My imprudent lines were answered, very petulantly, by *Somebody*, I believe a Rev. Mr. Hamilton." In a MS. where I met the answer, I wrote below:—

With Esop's lion, Burns says, sore I feel
Each other blow, but d—mn that ass's heel."

from
beats

daughters

eye
would

ressed was a daughter afterwards, with Sir pal clerks of the Court orge Street, as may be s. A younger sister of monston Ferrier, some- s Edgeworth," author- ce, and *Destiny*. Miss e and brilliant meta- rier, professor of moral St. Andrews, and editor ssor John Wilson, one rried.

But now unroof'd their palace stands,
 Their sceptre's sway'd by foreign hands;
 Fallen indeed, and to the earth,
 Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth.
 The injured Stuart line is gone!
 A race outlandish fills their throne;
 An idiot race, to honour lost;
 Who know them best despise them most.

A REPROOF BY THE WRITER OF THE LINES.

Rash mortal, and slanderous poet, thy name
 Shall no longer appear in the records of fame;
 Dost not know that old Mansfield, who writes like the Bible,
 Says the more 'tis a truth, sir, the more 'tis a libel!

REPLY TO A HOSTILE CRITIC OF THE LINES.

Like Esop's lion, Burns says, "sore I feel
 All others' scorn—but damn that ass's heel!"

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE

IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.¹

Burns visited Taymouth on 29th August, 1787, when on his Highland tour in company with his friend W. Nicol of the High School, Edinburgh. His brief note of the visit in his journal runs: "Taymouth—described in rhyme—meet the Hon. Charles Townshend."

Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
 These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
 Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,

¹ Taymouth Castle, the seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane, is situated in a beautiful valley in Perthshire, at the eastern extremity of Loch Tay, the waters of which here begin to form the river of the same name. In the accompanying engraving, besides the house and its splendid park, the eye catches sight of the little village of Kenmore and its bridge over the young Tay—the lake, and the range of hills bounding it to the north-west, including the grand hill of Ben Lawers. Taymouth Castle consists of a large modern quadrangular pile, with round towers at the corners, and a square central tower terminating in an airy pavilion. To the west projects the remnant of the former mansion, a strong tower built in the reign of James VI.; while to the east extends a range of outhouses and offices. The Tay passes behind the house, towards

Aberfeldy and Dunkeld, skirted on each side by magnificent woods. Among these there is an avenue of limes extending to a mile, which is said to convey to most minds the impression of some more than usually august Gothic cathedral.

The Breadalbane family is descended from Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, a younger son of the first ennobled person of the house of Campbell: he was one of the knights of Rhodes, subsequently designated of Malta. The fourth in descent from this warrior, also named Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, built the original house just alluded to, the name of which was till a comparatively recent period *Balloch*, that is *bealoch*, a mouth or gap, expressive of the situation of the mansion at the opening of the valley of the Tay.

[1787.

ES.

the Bible,

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Y-PIECE

company with his
his journal runs:

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Campbell: he was one
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, the name of which
it period *Balloch*, that
pressive of the situa-
ening of the valley of





W. J. Linnell

D. B. B. B. A.

KENMORE, AND TAYMOUTH CASTLE.
BREADALBANE.

Blackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh

Age 28.]

Burns says "
The chorus bel
versions. One

It was in the
—September 178
waterfalls of Me
village of Aberfel

My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
 Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.
 The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
 The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample sides;
 Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
 The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
 The Tay, meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
 The palace, rising on its verdant side;
 The lawns, wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste;
 The hillocks, dropt in Nature's careless haste;
 The arches, striding o'er the new-born stream;
 The village, glittering in the noontide beam—

* * * * *
 Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
 Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell:
 The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
 Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

* * * * *
 Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
 And look through Nature with creative fire;
 Here to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil'd,
 Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
 And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to soothe her bitter, rankling wounds;
 Here heart-struck Grief might heav'n-ward stretch her scan,
 And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man.

[Left unfinished.]

SONG—THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.¹

TUNE—"The Birks of Abergeldie."

Burns says "I composed these stanzas standing under the Falls of Moness, near Aberfeldy." The chorus belongs to an old song, called "The Birks of Abergeldie," of which there are several versions. One of them is given, along with this song, in Johnson's *Museum*.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
 Will ye go, will ye go,
 Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
 To the birks of Aberfeldy? birches

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes, slopes
 And o'er the crystal streamlets plays,
 Come let us spend the lightsome days
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.

Bonnie lassie, &c.

¹ It was in the course of his Highland tour, August—September 1787, that Burns visited the celebrated waterfalls of Moness, in the neighbourhood of the village of Aberfeldy in Strath Tay. These falls, which occur in a deep and narrow chasm behind Moness House, are described by Pennant in language sufficiently complimentary—"an epitome (he calls them) of everything that can be admired in the curiosity of

The little birdies blithely sing,
 While o'er their heads the hazels hing, hang
 Or lightly flit on wanton wing
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's, hill-sides
 The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,
 O'er-hung wi' fragrant spreading shaws, groves
 The birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
 White o'er the linn the burnie pours, steep rocks brooklet
 And rising, weets wi' misty showers wets
 The birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flee,
 They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me, from
 Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
 In the birks of Aberfeldy.
 Bonnie lassie, &c.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER,¹

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

In his letter to Mr. Walker, tutor to the duke's family, from Inverness, 5th September, in which this poem was inclosed, Burns writes:—"I have just time to write the foregoing, and to tell you that it was, at least the most part of it, the effusion of a half hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was *extempore*, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat and the jogging of the chaise would allow."

My Lord, I know your noble ear
 Woe ne'er assails in vain;
 Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
 Your humble slave complain,

waterfalls." They comprehend not only the usual phenomenon of a rivulet dashing down a rocky recess in the side of a range of hills, but several accessory cascades, which pour down the precipitous sides of that recess, and unite their waters with those of the principal stream below. The visitor of this beautiful scene first enters a glen, called the Den of Moness, clothed with hazel and mountain-ash in great luxuriance. As he advances, the sides of this glen become sheer precipices, of about two hundred feet in height, so near each other that the trees shooting out from the respective sides almost intermingle their branches. When visited by Burns, the beautiful domain of Moness was the property of a gentleman named Fleming. It now belongs to the Breadalbane family.

The introduction of the birks into this picturesque

locality by Burns is a poetic license, suggested by the almost identical chorus of the old song the "Birks of Abergeldie." We quote in reference to this from the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* (Edin. 1882):—"Strange that . . . Aberfeldy should most be famed for what it has not, and seemingly never had, the 'birks' of Burns's lyric. Rowans there are in abundance, and a myth has of course arisen that these have superseded the birks; but the absence of the latter from Aberfeldy in 1803 is as certain as their presence at Abergeldie years before Burns's day." The absence of the birches in 1803 was noted by Dorothy Wordsworth. Abergeldie Castle is on Deeside, near Balmoral.

¹ Bruar Falls in Athole are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by

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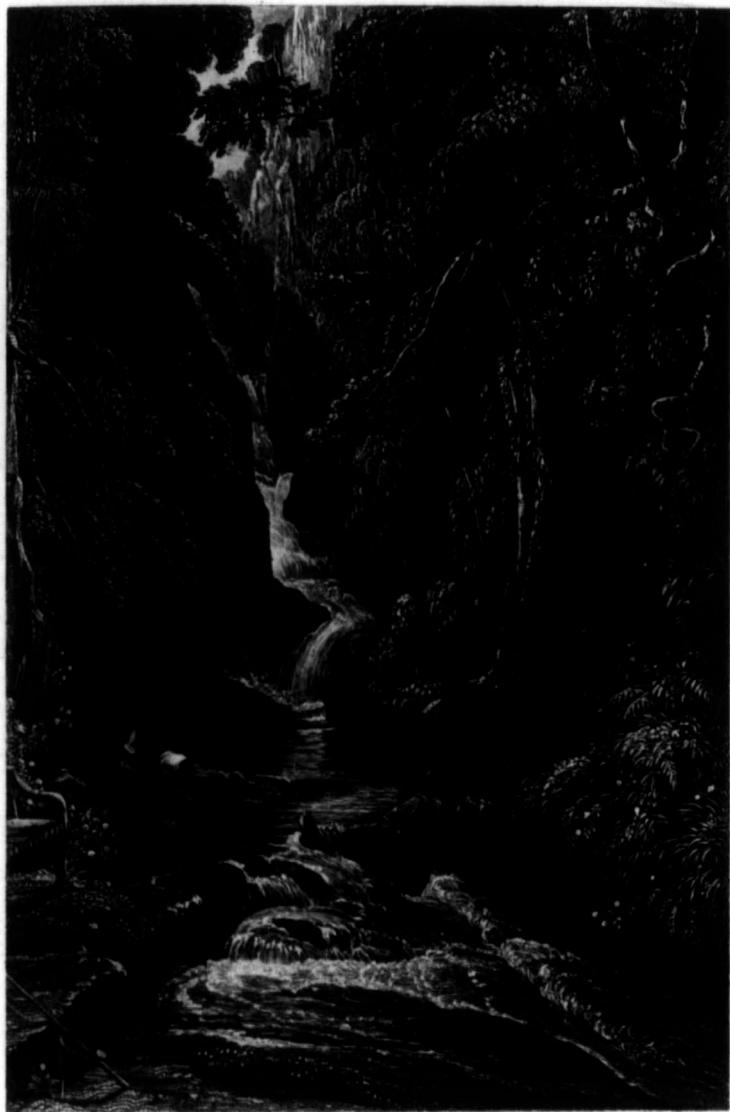
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, suggested by the
song the "Birks
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d (Edin. 1882):—
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H. M. R. S. A.

W. H. Lockhart

BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

FALLS OF THE MONIES

Blaikie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh

the want of trees and
stream of northern
Garry, is poured thro
bound the vale of the
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the road between Per
it makes two falls,
that delineated in th
whole scene, as it c
thus described by D
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takes its name from
Water, that rolls al
We went up the left
is the most rugged
which form it have l
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been made by the D
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breath before it re
to the Garry.

"Proceeding up
the footpath, we
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gether. This is c

How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
 In flaming summer-pride,
 Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
 And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumpin' glowrin' trouts, starfng
 That thro' my waters play,
 If, in their random, wanton spouts, darts
 They near the margin stray;
 If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
 I'm scorching up so shallow,
 They're left the whitening stanes amang, stones
 In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen, wept vexation
 As Poet Burns came by,
 That to a Bard I should be seen
 Wi' half my channel dry:
 A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
 Even as I was he shor'd me; promised
 But had I in my glory been,
 He, kneeling, wad ador'd me. would have

the want of trees and shrubs.—R. B. The Bruar, a stream of northern Perthshire, a tributary of the Garry, is poured through a chasm in the hills which bound the vale of the Garry on the north, two or three miles to the west of Blair-Athole, and near the line of the road between Perth and Inverness. In its descent it makes two falls, or rather sets of falls, of which that delineated in the engraving is the *upper*. The whole scene, as it existed in the days of Burns, is thus described by Dr. Garnett: "Before we reached Blair we passed the small village of Bruar which takes its name from a turbulent stream, called Bruar Water, that rolls along its rocky bed under a bridge. We went up the left bank of this river, whose channel is the most rugged that can be conceived; the rocks which form it have been worn into the most grotesque shapes by the fury of the water. A footpath has lately been made by the Duke of Athole, which conducts the stranger in safety along the side of the chasm, where he has an opportunity of seeing, in a very short time, several very fine cascades; one over which a bridge is thrown, forms a very picturesque object. This is called the lower fall of Bruar. The water here rushes under a bridge, and falls in a full broad sheet over the rocky steep, and descends impetuously through a natural arch into a dark black pool, as if to take breath before it resumes its course, and rushes down to the Garry.

"Proceeding up the same side of the river, along the footpath, we came in sight of another rustic bridge, and a noble cascade, consisting of three falls or breaks, one immediately above another; but the lowest is equal in height to both the others taken together. This is called the upper fall of the Bruar.

Crossing the bridge over this tremendous cataract, with trembling steps, we walked down the other bank of the river, to a point from whence we enjoyed the view of this fine fall to great advantage. The shelving rocks on each side of the bridge, with the water precipitating itself from rock to rock, and at last shooting headlong, filling with its spray the deep chasm, form a scene truly sublime."

Burns visited the Falls of the Bruar during his northern tour. Professor Walker (whom he had met, in the spring of this year, at the house of Dr. Blacklock), at that time living in the family of the Duke of Athole in the capacity of tutor, has left us a sketch of the poet's visit to the scenery of Blair-Athole, in which he says:—"I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape; but I never saw these feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung with a woody precipice, from which there is a noble waterfall, he threw himself on the heathy seat and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and rapturous enthusiasm of imagination. . . . It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time to supper. . . . After leaving Blair, he, by the duke's advice, visited the Falls of Bruar, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the verses inclosed." See also Lockhart's *Life*, pp. 77, 78, where additional particulars of his visit to Blair are given. Bruar Water no longer mourns the absence of "lofty firs and ashes cool." The duke complied with the poet's suggestion, and caused a great number of trees to be planted, which have added greatly to the charms of the scene.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
 In twisting strength I rin;
 There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
 Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
 Enjoying large each spring and well,
 As nature gave them me,
 I am, altho' I say't mysel',
 Worth gaun a mile to see.

run

precipice

going

Would then my noble master please
 To grant my highest wishes,
 He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
 And bonnie spreading bushes.
 Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
 You'll wander on my banks,
 And listen mony a grateful bird
 Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
 Shall to the skies aspire;
 The gowdspink, music's gayest child,
 Shall sweetly join the choir:
 The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
 The mavis mild and mellow;
 The robin pensive Autumn cheer,
 In all her locks of yellow:

lark

goldfinch

linnet

thrush

This too, a covert shall ensure,
 To shield them from the storm;
 And coward maukin sleep secure,
 Low in her grassy form:
 Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
 To weave his crown of flow'rs;
 Or find a sheltering safe retreat
 From prone-descending show'rs.

hare

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
 Shall meet the loving pair,
 Despising worlds, with all their wealth,
 As empty idle care:
 The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
 The hour of heav'n to grace,
 And birks extend their fragrant arms
 To screen the dear embrace.

Here, haply too, at vernal dawn,
 Some musing bard may stray,
 And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
 And misty mountain gray;

[1787.

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BRVAH WATER

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Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed.
Let fragrant birks, in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close-embow'ring thorn.

So may, old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,¹
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may, thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social flowing glasses,
The grace be—"A thole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses!"

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS, NEAR LOCH-NESS.²

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.

¹ The three daughters of the duke, the eldest twelve years of age, the next seven, the third an infant.

² From Burns's journal we learn that this visit to the Fall of Fyers (or Foyers) was on Wednesday, 5th September, 1787. In the evening he dined with Mr. William Inglis, afterwards Provost of Inverness, and it was observed that he was rather thoughtful and silent, being probably under strong emotion produced by the majesty and sublimity of the scene which he had just visited.

"The Fyers is not a very large stream, except in rainy weather; consequently there are great variations in the aspect of the cascade. In its medium fulness it pours through a narrow gullet in the rock in a round unbroken stream, which gradually whitens as it descends, like an old Jew's beard, till it falls into a half-

seen profound, two hundred and forty feet below the point of descent. A dense mist is constantly seen rising from the broken water, like the heavenward aspirations of an afflicted and tortured spirit. The noise is usually very loud. About a quarter of a mile further up the ravine there is another cascade, usually called the Upper Fall; a fearful gulf, down which the water descends by three leaps, and over which a bridge has been thrown, by way of station, for a sight of the cataract. All this stupendous ravine is covered by birches, on whose every leaf a vapoury dew continually hangs. Dr. Clarke, on visiting Fyers, declared it to be a finer cascade than that of Tivoli, and of all he had ever seen inferior only to Terni."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.—Dr. Johnson visited the fall in his tour in Scotland, but the stream was then very small.

Dim-seen, thro' rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
 The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'rs.
 Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
 And still below the horrid caldron boils—

[Left unfinished.]

EPIGRAM—THE HIGHLAND WELCOME.

COMPOSED AND REPEATED BY BURNS, TO THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE ON TAKING LEAVE AT A PLACE
 IN THE HIGHLANDS, WHERE HE HAD BEEN HOSPITABLY ENTERTAINED.¹

When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
 A time that surely shall come—
 In Heaven itself I'll ask no more,
 Than just a Highland welcome.

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.²

TUNE—"Strathallan's Lament."

"This air," says Burns in the Glenriddell copy of Johnson's *Museum* already referred to, "is the composition of one of the worthiest and best-hearted men living—Allan Masterton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause.—To tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*."

Thickest night, o'erhang my dwelling!
 Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
 Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
 Still surround my lonely cave!
 Crystal streamlets, gently flowing,
 Busy haunts of base mankind,
 Western breezes, softly blowing,
 Suit not my distracted mind.
 In the cause of right engaged,
 Wrongs injurious to redress,
 Honour's war we strongly waged,
 But the heavens denied success.
 Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
 Not a hope that dare attend,
 The wide world is all before us—
 But a world without a friend!

¹ Several localities have been mentioned as identified with this production, as Dalnacardoch, Kilarvock, &c. There would be many experiences of the warmest hospitality during the Highland tour.

² Viscount Strathallan commanded a squadron of

horse at the battle of Culloden, where he fell. The words of the song are supposed to be uttered by his son James Drummond, after the events of that fatal day had for ever blasted the hopes of the adherents of the unfortunate house of Stuart.

1787,

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Printed & Sold by James Glasgow & Edinburgh





GORDON CASTLE.

SPEYSIDE

Hackie & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh

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SONG—CASTLE GORDON.²

TUNE—"Morag." [But see the end of the note to the words.]

Streams that glide in orient plains,
 Never bound by winter's chains!
 Glowing here on golden sands,
 There¹ commix'd⁽¹⁾ with foulest stains,
 From tyranny's empurpled bands:⁽²⁾
 Thesé, their richly-gleaming waves,
 I leave to⁽³⁾ tyrants and their slaves;
 Give me the stream that sweetly laves
 The banks by Castle Gordon.

Spicy⁽⁴⁾ forests, ever gay,
 Shading from the burning ray,
 Hapless wretches sold to toil,
 Or the ruthless native's way,
 Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil:

¹ In the Edinburgh Common-place Book are the following variations: (1) immixed, (2) hands, (3) the, (4) Torrid.

² Gordon Castle, one of the finest mansions north of the Firth of Forth, is situated in the parish of Bellie and county of Moray, on the right bank of the Spey, and at the distance of about five miles from the efflux of that river into the Moray Firth. The house lies in a beautifully-wooded park, generally of level ground, and covering a very large area. The grand entry is by an arched building close beside the village of Fochabers; from which a road winds about a mile to the front of the castle. The front of the building, 568 feet in length, broken into strong light and shade by the recession of some of its parts, and gaining dignity from a lofty tower surmounting the centre, is of that grandeur which suits to almost princely rank and influence. From the house the view outward is equally fine. The site of the castle, in the Bog of Gight, was selected as a defensible position for the erection of a feudal tower by George, second Earl of Huntly, who died in 1501. This house was accessible by a narrow causeway through a morass, and by a drawbridge across a moat. It was called the House of the Bog, or the Bog, the name constantly given to it by Spalding in his many references to it in connection with the troublous affairs of the civil war. Each of the noble line who lived in it, successively earls of Huntly, marquises of Huntly, and dukes of Gordon, was also popularly distinguished by the familiar appellation of *The Gudeman o' the Bog*. Additions and alterations took place at different times, until in the latter part of the eighteenth century, George, fourth duke of Gordon, erected the present magnificent mansion—retaining, however, the original fortalice of the fifteenth century, towering high and proud over all the rest. With the fifth duke of Gordon, May 28, 1836, expired the main line of this great historical

family, the title of duke becoming extinct, while Gordon Castle, with the connected territory, to the value of £30,000 per annum, then became the property of the Duke of Richmond, son of the eldest sister of the deceased duke. The representation of the family and the title of Marquis of Huntly devolved at the same time upon George, Earl of Aboyne, descended from a younger son of the second marquis, who was beheaded in 1649. The dukedom of Gordon has latterly been conferred on the Duke of Richmond, who is now Duke of Richmond and Gordon (as also of Lennox).

George, fourth duke of Gordon—himself a clever writer of verses—and his beautiful and witty duchess, Jane Maxwell, were, it is well known, foid of the society of literary men. Beattie was their frequent guest at this noble mansion, and an intimate correspondent of the duchess. Burns, during the first winter that he resided in Edinburgh, was introduced to her grace, whose name appears in the list of the subscribers to his first metropolitan edition, for twenty-one copies. In the course of his Highland tour with Mr. Nicol (September, 1787), coming to Fochabers, and presuming, says Dr. Currie, on his acquaintance with the duchess, he proceeded to Gordon Castle, leaving Mr. Nicol at the inn in the village. At the castle our poet was received with the utmost hospitality and kindness, and the family being about to sit down to dinner, he was invited to take his place at the table as a matter of course. This invitation he accepted, and after drinking a few glasses of wine he rose up and proposed to withdraw. On being pressed to stay, he mentioned for the first time his engagement with his fellow-traveller; and his noble host offering to send a servant to conduct Mr. Nicol to the castle, Burns insisted on undertaking that office himself. He was, however, accompanied by a gentleman, a particular acquaintance of the duke, by whom the invitation was delivered in all the forms

Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave;
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms by Castle Gordon.

Wildly here, without control,
Nature reigns and rules the whole;
In that sober, pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood:
Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
By bonnie Castle Gordon.

SONG—LADY ONLIE.¹

TUNE—"The Ruffian's Rapt."

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| A' the lads o' Thornie-bank, | |
| When they gae to the shore o' Bucky, | go |
| They'll stap in and tak' a pint | step |
| Wi' Lady Onlie, honest lucky! | goodwife |
| Lady Onlie, honest lucky, | |
| Brews gude ale at shore o' Bucky, | |
| I wish her sale for her gude ale, | |
| The best on a' the shore o' Bucky. | |

of politeness. The invitation came too late; the pride of Nicol was inflamed into a high degree of passion by the neglect which he had already suffered. He had ordered the horses to be put to the carriage, being determined to proceed on his journey alone, and they found him parading the streets of Fochabers, before the door of the inn, venting his anger on the postillon for the slowness with which he obeyed his commands. As no explanation nor entreaty could change the purpose of his fellow-traveller, our poet was reduced to the necessity of separating from him entirely, or of instantly proceeding with him on their journey. He chose the last of these alternatives; and seating himself beside Nicol in the post-chaise with mortification and regret, he turned his back on Gordon Castle, where he had promised himself some happy days. Sensible, however, of the great kindness of the noble family, he made the best return in his power, by composing the above song, which he sent to James Hoy, librarian at Gordon Castle. How much the poet felt the abruptness of his departure may be gathered from a passage in one of his letters to Mr. Hoy:—"I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse to that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon.

May that obstinate son of Latin prose be curst to Scotch mile periods, and damned to seven league paragraphs; while declension and conjugation, gender, number, and tense, under the ragged banners of dissonance and disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array." Mr. Hoy's reply runs: "Your song I showed without producing the author, and it was judged by the duchess to be the production of Dr. Beattie. I sent a copy of it, by her grace's desire, to a Mrs. M'Pherson in Badenoch, who sings 'Morag' and all other Gaelic songs in great perfection. When the duchess was informed that you were the author, she wished you had written the verses in Scotch."—"Morag," the tune above alluded to, cannot be sung to the above poem, as may be seen by comparing its measure with that of the song (a few pages farther on) beginning "Loud blaw the frosty breezes," to which the air is suitable.

¹This ditty was composed in the autumn of 1787 and appeared in the second volume of the *Museum*. It is probably founded on some snatches of a song Burns had heard during his northern tour, Buckie being a fishing town on the Banffshire coast. The air formerly named as above is now better known as "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch."

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W. H. H. H.

LOCH TURRIT.
AMONG THE HILLS OF ARGENTINE

MADE BY THE LITHO. DEPT. OF THE GOVT. OF ARGENTINE

" This w
the guest
reception.

¹ See note t
² The Dye i
of the Feuch,
The " bfig" l
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Her house sae bien, her curch sae clean,
 I wat she is a dainty chucky;
 And cheerlie blinks the ingle-geed
 Of Lady Onlie, honest lucky!
 Lady Onlie, honest lucky, &c.

comfortable cap
 amiable matron (lit. hen)
 gleams blazing fire

SONG—THENIEL MENZIES' BONNIE MARY.

TUNE—"The Ruffan's Rant."¹

In coming by the brig o' Dye,²
 At Darlet we a blink did tarry;
 As day was dawin in the sky,
 We drank a health to bonnie Mary.
 Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary,
 Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary;
 Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie,
 Kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

moment
 dawning

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
 Her haffet locks as brown's a berry;
 And aye they dimpl't wi' a smile,
 The rosy cheeks o' bonnie Mary.
 Theniel Menzies', &c.

eyes
 temple

We lap and danced the lee-lang day,
 Till piper lads were wae and weary;
 But Charlie gat the spring to pay,
 For kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.
 Theniel Menzies', &c.

leaped live-long
 sad
 got tune

ON SCARING SOME WATER FOWL IN LOCH-TURIT,

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OCHTERTYRE.³

"This was the production of a solitary forenoon's walk from Oughtertyre House. I lived there, the guest of Sir William Murray, for two or three weeks, and was much flattered by my hospitable reception."—BURNS, GLENRIDDELL MSS.

Why, ye tenants of the lake,
 For me your wat'ry haunt forsake!
 Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
 At my presence thus you fly!

¹ See note to preceding song.² The Dye is a Kincardineshire stream, a tributary of the Feuch, which falls into the Dee near Banchory. The "brig" is on the line of the main road connecting Forfarshire and Deeside.³ Ochtertyre, or Auchtertyre, is a place of famed beauty in Perthshire, situated about two miles from Crieff, on what may be described as the last and lowest terrace of the Highlands, with a view towards the more fertile south. By the readers of Burns it

Why disturb your social joys,
 Parent, filial, kindred ties!—
 Common friend to you and me,
 Nature's gifts to all are free:
 Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
 Busy feed, or wanton lave;
 Or beneath the sheltering rock,
 Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
 Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
 Man, your proud usurping foe,
 Would be lord of all below:
 Plumes himself in Freedom's pride
 Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the clifty brow,
 Marking you his prey below,
 In his breast no pity dwells,
 Strong necessity compels:
 But man, to whom alone is giv'n
 A ray direct from pitying Heav'n,
 Glories in his heart humane—
 And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
 Only known to wand'ring swains,
 Where the mossy riv'let strays,
 Far from human haunts and ways;
 All on Nature you depend,
 And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might
 Dare invade your native right,
 On the lofty ether borne,
 Man with all his pow'rs you scorn;
 Swiftly seek on clanging wings,
 Other lakes and other springs;
 And the foe you cannot brave,
 Scorn at least to be his slave.

is to be carefully distinguished from another place of the same name, on the Teith, near the southern border of Perthshire, and not far from Stirling, which the poet also visited, it being then the residence of his friend Mr. Ramsay. He visited the former Ochertyre in October, 1787. The proprietor Sir William Murray, and his wife Lady Augusta, did all that lay within their enlightened and liberal natures to render the poet's stay in their house agreeable to him. In a letter to his friend Nicol, written from the house on the 15th of that month, he says, "I find myself very

comfortable here, neither oppressed by ceremony nor mortified by neglect. Lady Augusta is a most engaging woman, and very happy in her family, which makes one's outgoings and incomings very agreeable." The beautiful Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, the "Flower of Strathmore," was present to add to the charms of one of the loveliest spots in Scotland. The young lady was a cousin of Sir William, and frequently an inmate of his house. (See notes to song "Blythe was she," on next page.) Ochertyre is still in the hands of Sir William Murray's descendants.

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Engraved by H. Robinson

EUPHEMIA MURRAY

"THE PLUMER OF STRATHMORE"

FROM A MINATURE BY A STEWART IN POSSESSION OF
WILLIAM SMITH, ESQ. ADVOCATE

Black & Son, London, Glasgow & Edinburgh

Age 28.]

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SONG—BLYTHE WAS SHE.

TUNE—"Andro and his cutty gun."

"This song was composed," says Burns, "on Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose [a cousin of Sir William Murray of Ochertyre], commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore." The verses were produced during his residence at Ochertyre (near Crieff). (See note to preceding poem.)

Blythe, blythe, and merry was she,
 Blythe was she but and ben: in all parts of the house
 Blythe by the banks of Earn,
 And blythe in Glenturit glen.¹

By Auchtertyre grows the aik, oak
 On Yarrow banks the birken shaw; birch wood
 But Phemie was a bonnier lass
 Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
 Blythe, blythe, &c.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,
 Her smile was like a simmer morn;
 She trippèd by the banks of Earn,
 As light's a bird upon a thorn.
 Blythe, blythe, &c.

Her bonnie face it was as meek
 As ony lamb upon a lea;²
 The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
 As was the blink o' Phemie's ee, eye
 Blythe, blythe, &c.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
 And o'er the Lowlands I ha'e been;
 But Phemie was the blythest lass
 That ever trod the dewy green.
 Blythe, blythe, &c.

EPITAPH FOR WILLIAM NICOL,³ HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Ye maggots, feed on Nicol's brain,
 For few such feasts you've gotten;
 And fix your claws in Nicol's heart,
 For deil a bit o't's rotten.

¹ Glenturret, a glen of Perthshire through which Turret Burn runs a course of 8½ miles, when it falls into the Earn, half a mile west of the town of Crieff.

² In these two lines, according to the general opinion of the young lady's friends, Burns had felicitously indicated the peculiar style of beauty of the "Flower of Strathmore." The reader will to some extent be able to judge for himself by means of the accompanying portrait. The affability and beauty of Miss

Murray, then about eighteen years of age, charmed the heart of the poet. This lady was married in 1794, to David Smythe, Esq., of Methven, a judge in the Court of Session, with the title of Lord Methven, by whom she had several children.

³ The above epitaph is of course a compliment to the poet's cross-grained friend Nicol, who accompanied him on his northern tour in the autumn of 1787.

EPITAPH ON MR. W. CRUICKSHANK.¹

Honest Will to heaven's gane,
 And mony shall lament him,
 His faults they a' in Latin lay,
 In English nane e'er kent them.

SONG—A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.²

TUNE—"The Rose-bud."³

A rose-bud by my early walk,
 Adown a corn-inclosed bawk,⁴
 Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
 All on a dewy morning.
 Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
 In a' its crimson glory spread,
 And drooping rich the dewy head,
 It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest
 A little linnet fondly prest,
 The dew sat chilly on her breast
 Sae early in the morning.
 She soon shall see her tender brood,
 The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
 Among the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
 Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeanie fair!
 On trembling string or vocal air,
 Shall sweetly pay the tender care
 That tends thy early morning.

¹ Cruickshank was one of the classical masters of Edinburgh High School, and consequently a colleague of William Nicol. In his house in St. James's Square Burns resided for some time during his stay in Edinburgh. Jenny Cruickshank, his daughter, is the subject of the two following poems.

² Professor Walker in writing of meeting Burns at Mr. Cruickshank's (see preceding note) says: "At the end of October I called for him at the house of a friend, whose daughter, though not more than twelve, was a considerable proficient in music. I found him seated by the harpsichord of this young lady, listening with the keenest interest to his own verses, which she sang and accompanied, and adjusting them to the

music by repeated trials of the effect." Miss Cruickshank, the young lady referred to, was married in 1804 to James Henderson, writer, Jedburgh. Robert Chambers speaks of a beautiful oil-painting in the possession of Mr. Henderson's only surviving son, which justifies the appellation of "Rosebud," as, judging from the Hebe-like appearance of the portrait, she must have been a strikingly beautiful girl.

³ This air is a production of David Sillar, the poet's friend and brother poet and also a fiddler; it shows little sign of its composer being possessed of much musical genius.

⁴ A path (usually a ridge left untilled) in a corn-field.

So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
 Shall beauteous blaze upon the day,
 And bless the parent's evening ray
 That watch'd thy early morning.

TO MISS CRUICKSHANK,

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

Beauteous rose-bud, young and gay,
 Blooming on thy early May,
 Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
 Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
 Never Boreas' hoary path,
 Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
 Never baleful stellar lights,
 Taint thee with untimely blights!
 Never, never reptile thief
 Riot on thy virgin leaf!
 Nor even Sol too fiercely view
 Thy bosom, blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet-crimson gem,
 Richly deck thy native stem;
 Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
 Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
 While all around the woodland rings,
 And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
 Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
 Shed thy dying honours round,
 And resign to parent Earth
 The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

SONG—THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.¹

TUNE—"Bhannerach dhon na chri."

"These verses were composed on a charming girl, Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now (1793) married to James M'Kitrick Adair, Esq., physician. She is sister to my worthy friend Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of Ayr; but was at the time I wrote those lines (1787), residing at Harvieston in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon."—BURNS, GLENRIDDELL MSS.

How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
 With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!

¹ Charlotte Hamilton was a half-sister of the poet's twice married. Her mother was a sister of Margaret friend Gavin Hamilton, their common father being Chalmers's mother (see next note). Burns seems to

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K.¹ALK.²

But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon,
 Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.
 Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
 In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew!
 And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
 That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

O, spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
 With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
 And far be thou distant, thou reptile, that seizes
 The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!
 Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
 And England triumphant display her proud rose;
 A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
 Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

SONG—WHERE, BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.¹

TUNE—"Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercainey."²

"This song I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh."—R. B.

Where, braving angry winter's storms,
 The lofty Ochils rise,
 Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
 First blest my wondering eyes;

have imbibed a feeling of high admiration and respect for her. Immediately after their first interview he thus speaks of her in a letter to Gavin Hamilton (28th August, 1787): "Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration; she is not only beautiful but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness, and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. . . . Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind." In a letter written somewhat later to Margaret Chalmers, he says: "Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment now completed. The air is admirable, true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song, which an Inverness lady sung to me when I was there. I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it never had been set before. . . . I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well; and what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere, but just." The poetic compliment was the above song. On a second visit to Harvieston Burns was accompanied by Dr. Adair of Harrogate, whom he introduced to Miss Hamilton, and who afterwards

made her his wife. See in appendix to *Life, Dr. Adair's account of the Clackmannan tour*. "I was indebted to Burns," says the doctor, "for a connection, from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness."

¹ Margaret (or "Peggy") Chalmers was the youngest daughter of James Chalmers, Esq., of Fingland. By her mother, Euphemia Murdoch, daughter of the last laird of Cumloiden in the Stewartry of Kirkcubright, she was connected with the family of Burns's friend, Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, her mother being sister to Gavin Hamilton's stepmother, and aunt to Charlotte Hamilton celebrated in the preceding poem. The poet became acquainted with Miss Chalmers at Dr. Blacklock's in Edinburgh, and he renewed his acquaintance a little later when she was staying at the house of her uncle by marriage, Mr. Tait of Harvieston, at the foot of the Ochil Hills, the place referred to in the song. Her personal elegance and accomplished mind appear to have made a deep impression on him. She was then the bosom friend of her cousin Charlotte Hamilton, and frequently resided at Harvieston. The poet in his letters usually speaks of the two ladies together. Eleven or twelve letters addressed to her will be found among the poet's correspondence.

² The musical editor of Johnson's *Museum* says of

As one who, by some savage stream,
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd doubly, marks it beam
With art's most polish'd blaze.

Blest be the wild, sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their pow'r!
The tyrant death, with grim control,
May seize my fleeting breath;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

SONG—MY PEGGY'S FACE!¹

TUNE—"My Peggy's face."

Referring to this song, and the one immediately preceding it, Burns writing in the end of 1787 to Miss Margaret Chalmers, the heroine of both, remarks: "I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, madam, you have much above par—wit, understanding, and worth you possess in the first class. . . . I wish to show to the world the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prosemen."

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace, so void of art,—
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway!
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms,—
These are all immortal charms.

this tune: "The air which old Neil Gow composed on the death of Mr. Moray of Aberfairney is an excellent slow strathspey, and is well adapted to the violin, pianoforte, and other musical instruments; but the melody is not at all suitable for the voice, the leaps of eleven notes from E to A in alt. are entirely forbidden in vocal composition, such sudden skips from the natural [chest notes] to the falsetto being utterly

destructive of every good effect." We may add that not many non-professional vocalists *could* sing it, its compass being two octaves.

¹ The song was written in 1787 for the second volume of the *Museum*, Burns saying that he had a very strong private reason for wishing it in that volume. It would seem, however, to have been mislaid, as it did not make its appearance until the sixth volume.

STORMS.¹

Peggy Chalmers that

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Chalmers was the youngest
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Mauchline, her mother be-
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gether. Eleven or twelve
will be found among the

Johnson's *Museum* says of

SONG—THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.¹

TUNE—"Morag."

Loud blaw the frosty breezes,
 The snaws the mountains cover;
 Like winter on me seizēs,
 Since my young Highland Rover
 Far wanders nations' over:
 Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
 May Heaven be his warden:
 Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
 And bonnie Castle-Gordon!

The trees, now naked groaning,
 Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
 The birdies, dowie moaning,
 Shall a' be blythely singing,
 And every flower be springing.
 Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
 When by his mighty warden
 My youth's return'd to fair Strathspey,
 And bonnie Castle-Gordon.

hanging
 sorrowfully

live-long

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT DUNDAS, ESQ., OF ARNISTON,²

LATE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF SESSION.

"I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than from the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose. One of these times I shall ever remember with gnashing of teeth. 'Twas on the death of the late Lord President Dundas."—BURNS.

Lone on the bleaky hills the straying flocks
 Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
 Down foam the rivulets, red with dashing rains;
 The gathering floods burst o'er the distant plains;
 Beneath the blast the leafless forests groan;
 The hollow caves return a sullen moan.

¹ The Highland rover alluded to was, according to Stenhouse, the Young Chevalier, Prince Charles Stuart, who had been once received as a welcome guest at Gordon Castle before the disastrous day of Culloden.

² Robert Dundas of Arniston, elder brother of Lord Melville, was born in 1713, appointed president of the Court of Session in 1760, and died on 13th December, 1787. His eldest son, who was for many years lord advocate of Scotland, and afterwards lord chief-baron, died in 1819. Burns sent a copy of the poem to him, but received no answer. In a letter to Dr. Geddes he says: "I sent a copy of it, with my best

prose letter, to the son of the great man, the theme of the piece, by the hand, too, of one of the noblest men in God's world, Alexander Wood, surgeon, when, behold! his Solicitorship took no more notice of my poem or me than I had been a strolling fiddler, who had made free with his lady's name over a silly new reel! Did the gentleman imagine that I looked for any dirty gratuity?" The poem was written at the suggestion of Alexander Wood, surgeon, Edinburgh, and Charles Hay, advocate, afterwards Lord Newton. But Burns felt the task an ungrateful one, and said that his muse's fire was damped by the suspicions

Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
 Ye howling winds, and wintry-swelling waves!
 Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
 Sad, to your sympathetic scenes I fly;
 Where, to the whistling blast and waters' roar,
 Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.

O heavy loss, thy country ill could bear!
 A loss these evil days can ne'er repair!
 Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
 Her doubtful balance ey'd, and sway'd her rod;
 Hearing the tidings of the fatal blow,
 She sunk, abandon'd to the wildest woe.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
 Now gay in hope explore the paths of men:
 See, from his cavern, grim Oppression rise,
 And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes;
 Keen on the helpless victim see him fly,
 And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry.

Mark ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
 Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
 View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
 As guileful Fraud points out the erring way:
 While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
 The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong:
 Hark! injur'd Want recounts th' unlisten'd tale,
 And much-wrong'd Mis'ry pours th' unpitied wail

Ye dark waste hills, and brown unsightly plains,
 To you I sing my grief-inspired strains:
 Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll!
 Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
 Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign,
 Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
 To mourn the woes my country must endure,
 That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

always created by the wailings of the rhyming tribe over the ashes of the great. He never forgot, and resented keenly till the close of his life, the silence of the lord advocate. In a letter to Alexander Cunningham, 11th March, 1791, he writes:—"Highly as I respect the talents of their family, I never see the name *Dundas* in the column of a newspaper, but my heart seems straitened for room in my bosom; and if I am obliged to read aloud a paragraph relating to

one of them, I feel my forehead flush, and my nether lip quiver." In January, 1796, when a Tory majority ousted the Honourable Henry Erskine from the post of Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, and elected in his place the lord advocate, Robert Dundas, Burns soothed his injured *amour propre* of eight years' standing by giving "pious Bob" a sample of his art in a set of vigorous verses. See the "Dean of Faculty, a Ballad," in vol. iii.

R.¹

hanging
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live-long

ARNISTON,²

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BIRTHDAY ODE

FOR 31ST DECEMBER, 1787.¹

Afar the illustrious exile roams,
 Whom kingdoms on this day should hail;
 An inmate in the casual shed,
 On transient pity's bounty fed,
 Haunted by busy memory's bitter tale!
 Beasts of the forest have their savage homes,
 But He, who should imperial purple wear,
 Owns not the lap of earth where rests his royal head!
 His wretched refuge, dark despair,
 While ravening wrongs and woes pursue,
 And distant far the faithful few
 Who would his sorrows share.

False flatterer, Hope, away!
 Nor think to lure us as in days of yore.
 We solemnize this sorrowing natal day,
 To prove our loyal truth—we can no more,
 And owning Heaven's mysterious sway,
 Submissive, low adore.
 Ye honoured mighty Dead,
 Who nobly perished in the glorious cause,
 Your King, your Country, and her laws,
 From great DUNDEE, who smiling Victory led,
 And fell a Martyr in her arms,
 (What breast of northern ice but warms!)
 To bold BALMERINO's undying name,
 Whose soul of fire, lighted at Heaven's high flame,
 Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim:
 Not unrevenged your fate shall lie,
 It only lags, the fatal hour,
 Your blood shall, with incessant cry,
 Awake at last th' unsparing Power;
 As from the cliff, with thundering course,
 The snowy ruin smokes along
 With doubling speed and gathering force,

¹ It appears that a select club of Jacobites were in the practice of meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the birthday of Prince Charles, the Young Pretender (born at Rome, 31st December, 1720), and that Burns had been requested to write a birthday ode for the year 1787. In reply the bard sent them the above spasmodic effusion. Dr. Currie published only the second of the three sections of the ode, breaking off abruptly at the word "Vengeance" in the fourth last line, excusing himself from giving the whole produc-

tion on account of its want of originality, a considerable part of it, he considered, being rant. The poem was transcribed by its author into the Glenriddell Collection, now in the library of the Liverpool Athenæum. Burns's Jacobitism, it is well known, was of a merely sentimental romantic kind. It may be mentioned that Robert Chambers assigns 1786 as the date of the composition of this poem; Currie is the authority for the year later. The prince died at Florence exactly a month after the birthday thus celebrated.

Till deep it, crushing, whelms the cottage in the vale;
 So Vengeance' arm ensanguined, strong,
 Shall with resistless might assail,
 Usurping Brunswick's pride shall lay,
 And STEWART'S wrongs and yours, with tenfold weight, repay.

PERDITION, baleful child of night!
 Rise and revenge the injured right
 Of STEWART'S royal race:
 Lead on the unmuzzled hounds of hell,
 Till all the frightened echoes tell
 The blood-notes of the chase!
 Full on the quarry point their view,
 Full on the base usurping crew
 The tools of faction, and the nation's curse!
 Hark how the cry grows on the wind;
 They leave the lagging gale behind,
 Their savage fury, pitiless, they pour;
 With murdering eyes already they devour;
 See Brunswick spent, a wretched prey,
 His life one poor despairing day
 Where each avenging hour still ushers in a worse!
 Such havoc, howling all abroad
 Their utter ruin bring;
 The base apostates to their God,
 Or rebels to their KING.

SONG—THE BONNIE LASS OF ALBANIE.¹

TUNE—"Mary weep no more for me."

My heart is wae, and unco wae,
 To think upon the raging sea
 That roars between her gardens green
 And the bonnie lass of Albanie.

sad very

¹ The above song is entered in Burns's Common-place Book (first published complete in 1879) on pp. 28, 29 immediately following the song "Castle Gordon." It was originally published by Robert Chambers in 1852 from a "portion of a manuscript book in Burns's handwriting, which is now in the possession of Mr. B. Nightingale, London." Chambers's version differs in no essential respect from the above except that in stanza second "royal" is substituted for "noble." There is nothing to show exactly when the song was written, but from the date in the Common-place Book it must have been by 1789. We put it along with the above as being connected in subject.

"The bonnie lass of Albanie" was Charlotte Stuart, daughter of Prince Charles (the Young Pretender).

and of Clementina Walkinshaw, with whom the prince had lived for many years, and to whom some believed he was married. The daughter was legitimized by the title of Duchess of Albany in 1784. The duchess lived in almost constant attention on her father, and died 14th November, 1789, less than two years after the grave had closed over the ruined prince. The "isle of high degree" (3rd stanza) is Bute; the "town of fame" is Rothesay (the county town), which gave the title of Duke of Rothesay to the eldest sons of the kings of Scotland, which title is still borne by the eldest son of the British sovereign. The "witless youth" (4th stanza) was the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., whose reputation even at the date this song was written was far from being spotless.

This lovely maid's of noble blood,
That rulèd Albion's kingdoms three;
But oh, alas! for her bonnie face!
They hæ wrang'd the lass of Albanie.

In the rolling tide of smiling Clyde,
There sits an isle of high degree;
And a town of fame whose princely name
Should grace the lass of Albanie.

But there's a youth, a witless youth,
That fills the place where she should be;
We'll send him o'er to his native shore,
And bring our ain sweet Albanie.

Alas the day, and woe the day,
A false usurper wan the^d gree, gained superiority
That now commands the towers and lauds
The royal right of Albanie.

We'll daily pray, we'll nightly pray,
On bended knee most ferventlie,
That the time may come, with pipe and drum,
We'll welcome home fair Albanie.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

EXTEMPORE REPLY TO VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY
UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF CLARINDA.¹

27th December, 1787.

When dear Clarinda, matchless fair,
First struck Sylvander's rapturèd view,
He gazèd, he listenèd to despair,
Alas! 'twas all he dardèd to do.

Love, from Clarinda's heavenly eyes,
Transfixèd his bosom thro' and thro';
But still in Friendship's guarded guise,
For more the demon feardèd to do.

That heart already more than lost,
The imp beleaguèrèd all *perdue*;
For frowning Honour kept his post—
To melt that frown he shrunk to do.

¹ For a notice of the poet's heroine (Mrs. M'Lehose) whom he has celebrated under the name of Clarinda see our introduction to the Clarinda Correspondence, vol. iv. In a letter dated 20th December, 1787, to this lady, with whom he had but recently become acquainted, Burns says: "I have written you this scrawl because I have nothing else to do." Pastening

on this phrase the witty lady dashed off and sent him some verses commencing:

When first you saw Clarinda's charms,
What rapture in your bosom grew!
Her heart was shut to Love's alarms,
But then—you'd nothing else to do, &c.

His reply was the extempore effusion in the text.

His pangs the Bard refused to own,
 Tho' half he wished Clarinda knew;
 But Anguish wrung th' unweeting groan—
 Who blames what frantic Pain must do?

That heart, where motley follies blend,
 Was sternly still to Honour true
 To prove Clarinda's fondest friend,
 Was what a lover sure might do.

The Muse his ready quill employed,
 No nearer bliss he could pursue;
 That bliss Clarinda cold deny'd—
 "Send word by Charles how you do!"

The chill behest disarmed his muse,
 Till passion all impatient grew:
 He wrote, and hinted for excuse,
 'Twas 'cause "he'd nothing else to do."

But by those hopes I have above!
 And by those faults I dearly rue!
 The deed, the boldest mark of love,
 For thee, that deed I dare to do!

O could the Fates but name the price
 Would bless me with your charms and you!
 With frantic joy I'd pay it, thrice,
 If human art and power could do!

Then take, Clarinda, friendship's hand,
 (Friendship, at least, I may avow;)
 And lay no more your chill command,—
 I'll write whatever I've to do.

TO CLARINDA.

ON THE POET'S LEAVING EDINBURGH.

These verses, written before the end of January, 1788, appeared in the second volume of Johnson's *Museum*, published the same year, along with music set to them by Mr. J. G. C. Schetki, a German violoncellist of some note, with whom Burns had formed an acquaintance. In a note to Clarinda he writes:—"I have been with Mr. Schetki, the musician, and he has set the song finely." In another note to the same lady he says: "I have called the song 'Clarinda.' I have carried it about in my pocket and hummed it over all day." Despite, however, the beauty of the words, and Burns's satisfaction with the setting, the melody never became popular.

Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
 The measur'd time is run!
 The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
 So marks his latest sun.

gained superiority

III,

A LADY

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y dashed off and sent him

Clarinda's charms,
 our bosom grew!
 o Love's alarms,
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e effusion in the text.

To what dark cave of frozen night
 Shall poor Sylvander hie;
 Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
 The sun of all his joy.

We part—but by these precious drops
 That fill thy lovely eyes!
 No other light shall guide my steps
 Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
 Has blest my glorious day:
 And shall a glimmering planet fix
 My worship to its ray?¹

SONG—I AM MY MAMMIE'S AE BAIRN.

TUNE—"I'm o'er young to marry yet."

Of this song, the 107th in Johnson's *Museum*, Burns says: "The chorus of this song is old, the rest of it, such as it is, is mine."

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| I am my mammy's ae bairn, | one |
| Wi' unco folk I weary, Sir; | strange |
| And lying in a man's bed, | |
| I'm fley'd it mak me eerie, Sir. | afraid timorous |
| I'm o'er young, I'm o'er young, | |
| I'm o'er young to marry yet; | |
| I'm o'er young—'twad be a sin | |
| To tak' me frae my mammy yet. | from |
| | |
| Hallowmas is come and gane, | |
| The nights are lang in winter, Sir; | |
| And you and I in ae bed, | one |
| In trowth, I darena venture, Sir. | truth |
| I'm o'er young, &c. | |
| | |
| Fu' loud and shill the frosty wind | shrill |
| Blaws thro' the leafless timmer, Sir; | timber (or trees) |
| But if ye come this gate again, | way |
| I'll aulder be gin simmer, Sir. | ere |
| I'm o'er young, &c. | |

¹The poet did not leave Edinburgh for a short time after this poem was written, his departure taking place on the 18th February. In April following he made Jean Armour his wife, "glimmering planet" as at this time no doubt she appeared to him in comparison with his sun Clarinda.

SONG—TO THE WEAVER'S GIN YE GO.

TUNE—"To the weaver's gin ye go."

"The chorus of this song," writes Burns to Johnson, "is old. Here let me once for all apologize for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many of the beautiful airs wanted words. In the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together anything near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet whose every performance is excellent."

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| My heart was ance as blythe and free | once |
| As simmer days were lang, | |
| But a bonnie, westlin weaver lad | west-country |
| Has gart me change my sang. | made |
| To the weaver's gin ye go, fair maids, | if |
| To the weaver's gin ye go; | |
| I rede you right, gang ne'er at night, | advise |
| To the weaver's gin ye go. | |
| My mither sent me to the town, | |
| To warp a plaiden wab; | twilled flannel |
| But the weary, weary warpin' o't | |
| Has gart me sigh and sab. | made |
| To the weaver's, &c. | |
| A bonnie westlin weaver lad, | west-country |
| Sat working at his loom; | |
| He took my heart as wi' a net, | |
| In every knot and thrum. | |
| To the weaver's, &c. | |
| I sat beside my warpin'-wheel, | |
| And aye I ca'd it roun'; | drove |
| But every shot and every knock, | |
| My heart it gae a stoun. | gave painful throb |
| To the weaver's, &c. | |
| The moon was sinking in the west | |
| Wi' visage pale and wan, | |
| As my bonnie westlin weaver lad | west-country |
| Convoy'd me thro' the glen. | |
| To the weaver's, &c. | |
| But what was said, or what was done, | |
| Shame fa' me gin I tell; | befall if |
| But, oh! I fear the kintra soon | country |
| Will ken as weel's mysel'. ¹ | know |
| To the weaver's, &c. | |

¹ The fancied singer of the above verses has been identified with Jean Armour, who, to avoid the pressure of her father's displeasure, went in March, 1786, to Paisley, where she resumed acquaintanceship with a townsman of hers, Robert Wilson, a handsome young weaver. Wilson's frequent visits to Jean formed the subject of some scandalous reports which reached the poet's ears.

SONG—MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.¹

TUNE—"Macpherson's Rant."

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
 The wretch's destinie!
 Macpherson's time will not be long,
 On yonder gallows-tree.
 Sae rantingly, sae wantonly, swaggeringly
 Sae dauntingly gaed he;
 He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round, lively tune
 Below the gallows-tree.

O what is death but parting breath?—
 On mony a bloody plain
 I've dar'd his face, and in this place
 I scorn him yet again!
 Sae rantingly, &c.

¹ "Macpherson's Lament," says Sir Walter Scott, "was a well-known song many years before the Ayrshire bard wrote those additional verses which constitute its principal merit [see below]. This noted freebooter was executed at Inverness about the beginning of the last century. When he came to the fatal tree, he played the tune, to which he has bequeathed his name, upon a favourite violin, and holding up the instrument, offered it to any one of his clan who would undertake to play the tune over his body, at his lyke-wake; as none answered, he dashed it to pieces on the executioner's head, and flung himself from the ladder." Scott has erred, however, in naming Inverness as the place of Macpherson's execution. The records of his trial are still extant, and have been published. He was tried at Banff, along with three others, and convicted of being "repute an Egyptian and vagabond, and oppressor of his majesty's free lieges, in a bangstrie [violent] manner, and going up and down the country armed, and keeping markets in a hostile manner," and was sentenced to be executed at the cross of Banff, November 16, 1700, eight days after his conviction. Tradition asserts that the magistrates hurried on the execution early in the morning, and that Macpherson suffered several hours before the specified time. The motive for this indecent haste is said to have been a desire to defeat a reprieve, then on the way. An anonymous article in the first volume of the *New Monthly Magazine* supplies some particulars of his lineage and exploits. "James Macpherson was born of a beautiful gypsy who, at a great wedding, attracted the notice of a half-intoxicated Highland gentleman. He acknowledged the child, and had him reared in his house, until he lost his life in bravely pursuing a hostile clan, to recover a *spreath* of cattle taken from Badenoch. The gypsy woman hearing of this disaster in her rambles, the following summer came and took away her boy, but

she often returned with him, to wait upon his relations and clansmen, who never failed to clothe him well, besides giving money to his mother. He grew up in beauty, strength, and stature rarely equalled. His sword is still preserved at Duff House, a residence of the Earl of Fife, and few men of our day could carry, far less wield it as a weapon of war; and if it must be owned that his prowess was debased by the exploits of a freebooter, it is certain no act of cruelty, no robbery of the widow, the fatherless, or the distressed, and no murder, was ever perpetrated under his command. He often gave the spoils of the rich to relieve the poor; and all his tribe were restrained from many atrocities of rapine by the awe of his mighty arm. Indeed it is said that a dispute with an aspiring and savage man of his tribe, who wished to rob a gentleman's house while his wife and two children lay on the bier for interment, was the cause of his being betrayed to the vengeance of the law. . . . He was betrayed by a man of his own tribe, and was the last person executed at Banff previous to the abolition of heritable jurisdiction."

The words of the first stanza and the chorus of the "Lament" alluded to by Sir W. Scott, and composed by the freebooter in prison while he was under sentence of death, to the stirring air (= rant) which bears his name, are as follows:—

I've spent my time in rioting,
 Debauched my health and strength;
 I squandered fast as pillage came,
 And fell to shame at length.
 But dauntonly, and wantonly,
 And rantonly I'll gae;
 I'll play a tune, and dance it round,
 Beneath the gallows-tree.

For Carlyle's remarks on this song see his *Essay* on Burns in the present volume.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
 And bring to me my sword;
 And there's no a man, in all Scotland,
 But I'll brave him at a word.

Sae rantingly, &c.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
 I die by treacherie:
 It burns my heart I must depart
 And not avenged be.

turbulence

Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewell, light,—thou sunshine bright,
 And all beneath the sky!
 May coward shame distain his name,
 The wretch that dares not die!
 Sae rantingly, &c.

SONG—STAY, MY CHARMER, CAN YOU LEAVE ME!¹

TUNE—"An Gille dubh ciar-dhubh."

Stay, my charmer, can you leave me?
 Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
 Well you know how much you grieve me;
 Cruel charmer, can you go?
 Cruel charmer, can you go?

By my love so ill requited;
 By the faith you fondly plighted;
 By the pangs of lovers slighted:
 Do not, do not leave me so!
 Do not, do not leave me so!

SONG—MY HOGGIE.³

TUNE—"O what will I do gin my Hoggie die."

What will I do gin my Hoggie die?
 My joy, my pride, my Hoggie!
 My only beast, I had nae mae,
 And vow but² I was vogie!

if little sheep

no more

proud

¹ This song was written to be sung to the simple and pathetic air known to the Sassenach as "The Black Haired Lad." It was a favourite melody of Burns's, who had a set of it transmitted to him from the Highlands.

² *Vow but* has here the meaning of indeed, in truth, let me tell you.

³ This song is perhaps but an improved version of an old ditty. Stenhouse, however, expressly asserts that it was composed by Burns "as appears from the

swaggeringly

lively tune

o wait upon his relations
 led to clothe him well,
 nother. He grew up in
 e rarely equalled. His
 ff House, a residence of
 of our day could carry,
 of war; and if it must be
 debased by the exploits
 i no act of cruelty, no
 erless, or the distressed,
 petrated under his com-
 ills of the rich to relieve
 e restrained from many
 we of his mighty arm.
 ite with an aspiring and
 wished to rob a gentle-
 and two children lay on
 the cause of his being
 the law. . . . He was
 i tribe, and was the last
 vious to the abolition of

za and the chorus of the
 W. Scott, and composed
 while he was under sen-
 air (= rant) which bears

rioting,
 h and strength;
 illage came,
 length.
 d wantonly,
 l gae;
 d dance it roun',
 ows-tree.

is song see his Essay on

| | | |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld, | live-long | fold |
| Me and my faithfu' doggie; | | |
| We heard nought but the roaring linn, | cataract | |
| Among the braes sae scroggie; | slopes | bushy |
| But the houlet cried frae the castle wa', | owl | from |
| The blitter frae the boggie, | snipe (or bittern) | bog |
| The tod replied upon the hill, | fox | |
| I trembled for my Hoggie. | | |
| When day did daw, and cocks did craw, | dawn | |
| The morning it was foggy; | | |
| An unco tyke lap o'er the dyke, | strange dog leaped | wall |
| And maist has kill'd my Hoggie. | almost | |

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

TUNE—"Macgregor of Ruara's Lament."

Burns says of this song: "I composed these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod¹ of Raza [Rasay or Raasay], alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the Earl of Loudoun, who shot himself out of sheer heartbreak at some mortifications he suffered owing to the deranged state of his finances."

Raving winds around her blowing,
 Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
 By a river hoarsely roaring,
 Isabella stray'd deploring—
 "Farewell, hours that late did measure
 Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
 Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow,
 Cheerless night that knows no morrow!

MS. in his own handwriting now before me." Cromek in introducing this effusion into his *Select Scottish Songs* (1810) criticises it thus:—"It is a silly subject treated sublimely. It has much of the fervour of the 'Vision.'" (!) *Hog*, of which *hoggie* is the diminutive, means a young sheep before it is first shorn. Burns says of the tune: "Dr. Walker, who was minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now [1791] Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told Mr. Riddell the following anecdote concerning this air. He said, that some gentlemen, riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet, consisting of a few houses, called Moss-paul; they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at the door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called 'What will I do gin my Hoggie die.' No person except a few females at Moss-paul knew this fine old tune, which in all probability would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen [Stephen Clarke, organist, Edinburgh] who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down."

¹ We have already spoken of this lady and her family. See note p. 215. We extract the following from a letter of the poet's to Mrs. Dunlop under date 16th August, 1788. "I was yesterday at Mr. Miller's [of Dalswinton House] to dinner for the first time. My reception was quite to my mind; from the lady of the house quite flattering. . . . In the course of conversation Johnson's *Musical Museum*, a collection of Scottish songs with the music, was talked of. We got a song on the harpsichord, beginning 'Raving Winds around her blowing.' The air was much admired: the lady of the house asked me whose were the words. 'Mine, madam—they are indeed my very best verses:' she took not the smallest notice of them! The Scottish proverb says well, 'King's caff is better than ither folks' corn.' I was going to make a New Testament quotation about 'casting pearls,' but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste."—Something may be said in the lady's defence. The song is not one of the poet's best, and the air to which it was set is rhythmically unsuitable.

¹ The air is one of the melodies. From *kins' History of Queen and Purcell the birthday ode to note for note, v Before this, how the tune as the Northern Catch with thee, sweet*
 VOL. I

“O'er the past too fondly wandering,
On the hopeless future pondering;
Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to mis'ry most distressing,
O how gladly I'd resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!”

SONG—UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.¹TUNE—“*Cold blows the wind.*”

“The chorus of this song,” says Burns, “is old; the two stanzas are mine.”

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west, from
The drift is driving sairly; sorely
Sae loud and shrill I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.
Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early:
When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn, shivering
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn,—
I'm sure it's winter fairly.
Up in the morning, &c.

SONG—HOW LONG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.²

FIRST SET.

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie! away from
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

¹ The air is one of the finest and oldest of Scottish melodies. From an anecdote given in Sir John Hawkins' *History of Music*, it appears to have been a favourite of Queen Mary's, the consort of William III., and Purcell the distinguished musician composed a birthday ode to the queen in which this tune, almost note for note, was made to serve as the bass part. Before this, however, John Hilton in 1625 published the tune as the third-voice part to what is called a Northern Catch for three voices, beginning “I se gae with thee, sweet Peggy.” The tune is also united to

one of the songs of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*. There is an excellent song of five double verses on the same subject and to the same air, by John Hamilton, a musician in Edinburgh (who died in 1814), which is popular over Scotland.

² This song was written by Burns in 1788 to a Gaelic melody which he picked up in the Highlands and sent to Johnson's *Museum*. In October, 1794, he altered it slightly and added a chorus to suit the air of “Cauld kail in Aberdeen” for Thomson's *Melodies of Scotland*.

When I think on the happy days
 I spent wi' you, my dearie,
 And now what lands between us lie,
 How can I be but eerie!¹ timorous
 And now what lands between us lie,
 How can I be but eerie!

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
 As ye were wae and weary! woeful
 It was na sae ye glinted by flashed
 When I was wi' my dearie.
 It was na sae ye glinted by
 When I was wi' my dearie.

SONG—THERE WAS A LASS, THEY CA'D HER MEG.²

TUNE—"Duncan Davison."

There was a lass, they ca'd her Meg, called
 And she held o'er the moors to spin;
 There was a lad that follow'd her,
 They ca'd him Duncan Davison.

‡ The moor was dreigh, and Meg was skeigh, wearisome disdainful
 Her favour Duncan couldna win;
 For wi' the rock she wad him knock, distaff would
 And aye she shook the temper-pin.³ always

As o'er the moor they lightly foor, proceeded
 A burn was clear, a glen was green, brook
 Upon the banks they eas'd their shanks
 And aye she set the wheel between;
 But Duncan swore a haly aith, holy oath
 That Meg should be a bride the morn;
 Then Meg took up her spinnin' graith, utensils
 And flang them a' out o'er the burn.

We'll big a house—a wee, wee house, build
 And we will live like king and queen,
 Sae blythe and merry we will be
 When ye set by the wheel at e'en.

¹ Nervous, or lonely and ill-at-ease, would perhaps best suit the context.

² The note by Stenhouse accompanying this lyric runs:—"This very humorous song was composed by Burns, although he did not openly choose to avow it. I have recovered his original manuscript copy of this song, which is the same as that inserted in the *Museum*." The tune ("Duncan Davison") to which the words are set is an old and still popular strathspey. The last four lines have no connection with the

rest, and are probably borrowed from an old song. The present writer has heard one in which occur similar lines:

I can drink and no be drunk;
 I can fight and no be slain;
 An' I can kiss my neighbor's wife,
 An' aye come welcome to my ain.

³ The wooden pin used for tempering or regulating the motion of the spinning-wheel.

A man may drink and no be drunk;
 A man may fight and no be slain;
 A man may kiss a bonnie lass,
 And aye be welcome back again.

SONG—MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.

TUNE—"Druimion dubh."

"I composed these verses," says Burns, "out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies."

Musing on the roaring ocean,
 Which divides my love and me;
 Wearying heaven, in warm devotion,
 For his weal, where'er he be.

Hope and fear's alternate billow
 Yielding late to nature's law;
 Whisp'ring spirits round my pillow
 Talk of him that's far awa.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
 Ye who never shed a tear,
 Care-untroubled, joy-surrouided,
 Gaudy day to you is dear.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me;
 Downy sleep, the curtain draw;
 Spirits kind, again attend me,
 Talk of him that's far awa!

SONG—TO DAUNTON ME.

TUNE—"To daunton me" (otherwise known as "Thee, Johnie Lad").

The blude-red rose at Yule may blaw,
 The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,
 The frost may freeze the deepest sea;
 But an auld man shall never daunton me. subdue
 To daunton me, and me so young,
 Wi' his fause heart and flattering tongue,
 That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
 For an auld man shall never daunton me.

For a' his meal and a' his maut, malt
 For a' his fresh beef and his saut, salt
 For a' his gold and white monie,
 An auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, &c.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,
 His gear may buy him glens and knowes;
 But me he shall not buy nor fee,
 For an auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, &c.

wealth cows ewes
 knolls
 hire

He hirples twa-fauld as he dow,
 Wi' his toothless gab and his auld beld pow,
 An' the rain rains down frae his red blear'd ee—
 That auld man shall never daunton me.
 To daunton me, &c.¹

limps bent double can
 mouth bald be
 eye

TO CLARINDA.

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING GLASSES.

Fair Empress of the Poet's soul,
 And Queen of Poetesses;
 Clarinda, take this little boon,
 This humble pair of glasses,—

And fill them high with generous juice,
 As generous as your mind;
 And pledge me in the generous toast—
 "The whole of human kind!"

"To those who love us!"—second fill;
 But not to those whom we love;
 Lest we love those who love not us!
 A third—"to thee and me, love!"

SONG—THE BONNIE LAD THAT'S FAR AWA'.²

TUNE—"The bonnie lad that's far awa'."

O how can I be blythe and glad,
 Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
 When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best,
 Is o'er the hills and far awa'?

finely dressed

¹ The old songs sung to the air "To daunton me" are Jacobitical. The air is found in Oswald's collection, 1740.

² "This little lamentation of a desolate damsel," says Jeffrey, "is tender and pretty." Herd's *Collection* supplies the germ of this song, in which it is supposed the poet has contrived to speak the feelings of Jean Armour, when the sternness of her father

obliged her to leave home for the second time, and seek shelter under the roof of William Muir, the honest miller of Tarbolton, owing to the result of her renewed intimacy with Burns. This, according to Chambers, was "in the middle of winter" (1787-88). In the month of March following she gave birth to twin daughters, who died in a few days. See letter of Burns to Robert Ainslie, 3rd March, 1788.

"Yeste
 through
 turned m
 O'Kean,
 with thes
 measure

¹ The lett
 first eight li
 horn replie
 and that th
 he would li
 that they sh

It's no the frosty winter wind,
 It's no the driving drift and snaw;
 But aye the tear comes in my ee,
 To think on him that's far awa'.

eye

My father pat me frae his door,
 My friends they hae disown'd me a',
 But I hae ane will tak my part,
 The bonnie lad that's far awa'.

put from

have

one

A pair o' gloves he gave to me,
 And silken snoods he gave me twa;
 And I will wear them for his sake,
 The bonnie lad that's far awa'.

hair-bands

The weary winter soon will pass,
 And spring will clear the birken shaw;
 And my sweet babe will be born,
 And he'll come hame that's far awa'.

clothe birch wood

SONG—THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.¹

TUNE—"Captain O'Kean."

"Yesterday," says Burns in a letter to Robert Cleghorn, dated 31st March, 1788, "as I was riding through a tract of melancholy, joyless muirs, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, 'Captain O'Kean,' coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. . . . I am tolerably pleased with these verses, but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music."

The small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
 The murmuring streamlet winds clear through the vale;
 The hawthorn trees⁽¹⁾ blow in the dews of the morning,
 And wild scattered cowslips bedeck the green vale;
 But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
 While⁽²⁾ the lingering moments are number'd by Care?
 No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,⁽³⁾
 Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dar'd, could it merit their malice,
 A KING and a FATHER to place on his throne?
 His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
 Where the⁽⁴⁾ wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none.

¹ The letter quoted in the head-note inclosed the first eight lines of the "Chevalier's Lament." Cleghorn replied that he was delighted with the words, and that they suited the tune to a hair; adding that he would like a verse or two more, and suggesting that they should be in the Jacobite style. "Suppose,"

says he, "it should be sung after the fatal field of Culloden, by the unfortunate Charles." Burns took the hint; he added a second stanza, infusing into the lines the strong Jacobitical spirit which his friends desiderated. Culloden was fought April 16th, 1746; Prince Charles escaped to France in September.

I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
 I hear her charm the air:
 There's not a bonnie flower that springs,
 By fountain, shaw, or green, wood
 There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
 But minds me o' my Jean. reminds

EPISTLE TO HUGH PARKER, MERCHANT, KILMARNOCK.¹

June, 1788.

In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
 A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
 Where words ne'er crost the Muse's heckles,²
 Nor limpet in poetic shackles;
 A land that Prose did never view it,
 Except when drunk he stacher't thro' it; staggered
 Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek, chimney-corner
 Hid in an atmosphere of reek, smoke
 I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk, whirr corner
 I hear it—for in vain I leuk.—
 The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
 Enhusk'd by a fog infernal:
 Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
 I sit and count my sins by chapters; spirit other
 For life and spunk like ither Christians,
 I'm dwindled down to mere existence;
 We' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,³ folks
 Wi' nae kenn'd face but Jenny Geddes.⁴ known
 Jenny, my Pegasean pride!
 Dowie she saunters down Nithside, sad
 And aye a westlin' leuk⁵ she throws, westward look
 While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose! hop
 Was it for this, wi' canny care, provident
 Thou bure the Bard through many a shire? bore
 At howes or hillocks never stumbled, hollows
 And late or early never grumbled?—

¹ Hugh Parker was a brother of William Parker, banker, Kilmarnock, an old friend of the poet, to whom the song—

Ye sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,

refers. Hugh Parker is referred to only once in the Correspondence. In a letter to Mr. Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, written from Stirling on 26th August, 1787, Burns says, "I hope Hughoc is going on and prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin." The epistle in the text was found among Parker's papers at his death.

² Heckles. An apparatus consisting of a series of long metallic teeth, through which hemp, flax, &c., are drawn, so as to comb the fibres out straight, and

fit them for the subsequent operations. The propriety of the use of the term here is obvious.

³ Ellisland is close to the eastern border of the stewartry (or county) of Kirkcudbright, one of the divisions of the district called Galloway, Wigtownshire being the other.

⁴ His old mare.

⁵ A look westward, that is Ayrshire-ward, Ayrshire being north-west of Ellisland. Jean, now Mrs. Burns, was still at Mauchline, since he had not as yet a house to put her into. This epistle was written in June, 1788, from the hovel in which he was temporarily residing, and it was the end of November before he had accommodation for his wife and household.

O, had I power like inclination,
 I'd heeze thee up a constellation, hoist
 To canter with the Sagitarre,
 Or loup the ecliptic like a bar; leap
 Or turn the pole like any arrow;
 Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
 Down the zodiac urge the race,
 And cast dirt on his godship's face;
 For I could lay my bread and kail broth
 He'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail. salt
 Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
 And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
 And nought but peat-reek i' my head,
 How can I write what ye can read?
 Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
 Ye'll find me in a better tune;
 But till we meet and weet our whistle, wet
 Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

ROBERT BURNS.

SONG—O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.¹

TUNE—"My love is lost to me."

O, were I on Parnassus' hill!
 Or had of Helicon my fill,
 That I might catch poetic skill,
 To sing how dear I love thee.
 But Nith maun be my muse's well, must
 My muse maun be thy bonnie sel';
 On Corsincon² I'll glow'r, and spell stare
 And write how dear I love thee.
 Then come, sweet muse, inspire my lay!
 For a' the lee-lang simmer's day, live-long
 I couldna sing, I couldna say,
 How much, how dear I love thee.
 I see thee dancing o'er the green,
 Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean, slim
 Thy tempting lips—thy roguish een— eyes
 By heaven and earth, I love thee!
 By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
 The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;
 And aye I muse and sing thy name,
 I only live to love thee.

¹ This song was composed in honour of Mrs. Burns during the poet's first weeks' residence at Ellisland. —The plaintive melody "My love is lost to me" is a composition of Oswald's and was published in his *Caledonian Pocket Companion*.

² Corsincon or Corsancone is a lofty conical hill (height 1547 feet) in New Cumnock parish, Ayrshire, about 25 miles from Burns's farm, Ellisland. Near the foot of it the river Nith crosses from Ayrshire into Dumfriesshire.

¹ The above poet's marriage a welcome land. "At the time of independence domestic comfort and a few of us, the more ever experienced feelings in the world on the mod

Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I love thee.

SONG—NAEBODY.¹

TUNE—"Naebody."

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| I hae a wife o' my ain— | own |
| I'll partake wi' naebody; | |
| I'll tak cuckold frae nané, | from none |
| I'll gie cuckold to' naebody. | |
| I hae a penny to spend, | |
| There—thanks to naebody; | |
| I hae naething to lend, | |
| I'll borrow frae naebody. | |
| I am naebody's lord— | |
| I'll be slave to naebody; | |
| I hae a guid braid sword, | broad |
| I'll tak dunts frae naebody. | blows |
| I'll be merry and free, | |
| I'll be sad for naebody; | |
| If naebody care for me, | |
| I'll care for naebody. | |

SONG—LOUIS, WHAT RECK I BY THEE.²

TUNE—"Louis, what reck I by thee!"

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Louis, what reck I by thee, | |
| Or Geordie on his ocean? | |
| Dyvor, beggar louns to me,— | bankrupt fellows |
| I reign in Jeanie's bosom. | |
| Let her crown my love her law, | |
| And in her breast enthrone me: | |
| Kings and nations,—swith awa'! | quickly |
| Reif randies, I disown ye! | thieving vagabonds |

¹The above verses were written shortly after the poet's marriage, and are characterized by Lockhart as a welcome to his wife under her roof-tree at Ellisland. "At this period," says Dr. Currie, "sentiments of independence buoyed up his mind, pictures of domestic content and peace rose on his imagination, and a few days passed away, as he himself informs us, the most tranquil, if not the happiest, he had ever experienced." In this situation he expressed his feelings in the above vigorous verses. They are formed on the model of an old lyric beginning:—

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| I hae a wife o' my ain, | |
| I'll be hadden to naebody; | beholden |
| I hae a pgt and a pan, | pot |
| I'll borrow frae naebody. | |

They were sent to Johnson's *Museum*, where they appeared set to a sprightly air taken from Oswald's *Pocket Companion*.

²This song, rather bald and abrupt in style, was written probably about the date of the poet's marriage, and appeared first in the fifth volume of the *Museum*. "Jeanie," of course, is Mrs. Burns.

TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., WRITER, EDINBURGH.

ELLISLAND, NITHSDALE, July 27th, 1788.

My god-like friend—nay, do not stare,
 You think the phrase is odd-like;
 But "God is Love" the saints declare,
 Then surely thou art god-like.

And is thy ardour still the same?
 And kindled still at Anna?
 Others may boast a partial flame,
 But thou art a volcano!

Ev'n Wedlock asks not love beyond
 Death's tie-dissolving portal;
 But thou omnipotently fond,
 May'st promise love immortal.

Thy wounds such healing powers defy,
 Such symptoms dire attend them,
 That last great antihectic try—
 Marriage perhaps may mend them.

Sweet Anna has an air—a grace
 Divine, magnetic, touching;
 She talks, she charms—but who can trace
 The process of bewitching?¹

SONG—"ANNA, THY CHARMS."

TUNE—"Bonnie Mary."

Anna, thy charms my bosom fire,
 And waste my soul with care;
 But ah! how bootless to admire,
 When fated to despair!
 Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,
 To hope may be forgiv'n;
 For sure 'twere impious to despair,
 So much in sight of Heav'n!

¹The above lines form part of an epistle which will be found under the above date in the General Correspondence.—The Anna (a celebrated beauty, daughter of John Stewart, Esq., of East Craigs) alluded to as Cunningham's adored one, jilted him and became the wife of Mr. Forrest Dewar, surgeon, and subsequently a town-councillor of Edinburgh. Cunningham felt the lady's deceit very deeply, and was greatly sympathized with by his friend the poet, who composed the songs "She's fair and fause," "Had I

a cave," and "Now Spring has clad," in reference to this incident. See note to last-mentioned song.

²Mr. Scott Douglas in his Edinburgh Edition of Burns suggests that this brief epigrammatic song is "simply a vicarious effusion, intended to proceed from the lips of the author's forlorn friend [Alexander] Cunningham." In support of this he quotes from a hitherto unpublished letter the preceding stanzas, in which the poet banters his friend on his consuming love for Anna. See previous note.

In a letter
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¹"The fir
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 16th Septem

G.H.

EPISTLE TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY,¹

REQUESTING A FAVOUR.

In a letter to Mr. Graham, written from Ellisland on 10th September, 1788, the following epistle was enclosed. Burns in his letter states that having got his excise commission, which he regarded as his sheet-anchor in life, and his farm being certain to prove a ruinous concern by itself, he wished to be enabled to meet the responsibilities of his married life, and to extricate himself from his embarrassments by getting an appointment as officer in the district in which Ellisland was situated. Through Mr. Graham's influence he had obtained his commission to the excise in February of this year, and next year the favour now asked was granted, the poet being made officer in the district of his residence.

When Nature her great master-piece design'd,
And fram'd her last, best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
She form'd of various parts the various man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth;²
Plain plodding industry, and sober worth:
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
And merchandise' whole genus take their birth,
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
The lead and buoy are needful to the net;
The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
Makes a material for mere knights and squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow;
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave designs—
Law, physics, politics, and deep divines:
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
Nature, well pleas'd, pronounced it very good;
But e'er she gave creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she tried one curious labour more.
Some spumy, fiery, *ignis fatuus* matter;
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
With arch-alacrity and conscious glee
(Nature may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a Poet:

¹ "The first epistle to Graham of Fintry," says Currie, "is not equal to the second, but it contains too much of the characteristic vigour of its author to be suppressed."—It was an attempt to comply with the advice of many of his literary friends, viz.: to write in English so as to increase the circle of his readers and admirers. It is an imitation, or rather, as Burns himself says (in letter to Miss Chalmers of 16th September, 1788), "in the manner of" Pope's

Moral Epistles, and "was," says Alexander Smith, "the poet's earliest attempt in the manner of Pope. It has its merits of course; but it lacks the fire, ease, and sweetness of his earlier epistles to Lapraik, Smith, and others."

² Variation in the holograph copy in the British Museum:—

The useful many, first she calls them forth.

Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
 When blest to-day unmindful of to-morrow.
 A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
 Admir'd and prais'd—and there the homage¹ ends:
 A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,
 Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
 Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
 Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live:
 Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
 Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
 She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.
 Pitying² the propless climber of mankind,
 She cast about a standard tree to find;
 And, to support³ his helpless woodbine state,
 Attach'd him to the generous truly great,⁴—
 A title, and the only one I claim,
 To lay strong hold for help on bounteous⁵ Graham.

Pity the tuneful Muses' hapless⁶ train,
 Weak, timid landmen on life's stormy main!
 Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
 That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough;
 The little fate allows, they share as soon,
 Unlike sage, proverb'd Wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
 The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
 Ah, that 'the friendly e'er should want a friend!
 Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
 Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
 Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,
 (Instinct 's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
 Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
 We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?
 Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
 God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
 But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,
 Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
 Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
 Come thou who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
 FRIEND OF MY LIFE, true patron of my rhymes!
 Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
 Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
 Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
 I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
 I crave⁷ thy friendship at thy kind command;
 But there are such who court the tuneful Nine—
 Heavens! should the branded character be mine!

¹ In British Museum MS. "wages." ² MS. "viewing." ³ round the truly great." ⁴ MS. "Generous." ⁵ MS.
⁶ MS. "In pity for." ⁷ MS. "She clasp'd his tendrils" "Helpless." ⁸ MS. "Tax."

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Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
 Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
 Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
 Soars on the spurning wing of injur'd merit!
 Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
 Pity the best of words should be but wind!
 So, to heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,
 But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.
 In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
 They dun Benevolence with shameless front;
 Oblige them, patronise their tinsel lays—
 They persecute you all your future days!
 Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
 My horny fist assume the plough again;
 The piebald jacket let me patch once more;
 On eighteen-pence a week I've liv'd before.
 Though, thanks to Heaven,* I dare even that last shift,
 I trust meantime my boon is in thy gift:
 That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
 Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
 My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

SONG—THE FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE.

TUNE—"Killiecrankie."

*The occasion of this ballad was as follows:—When Mr. Cunninghame of Enterkin came to his estate, two mansion-houses upon it, Enterkin and Annbank, were both in a ruinous state. Wishing to introduce himself with some *éclat* to the county, in the autumn of 1788, he got temporary erections made on the banks of Ayr, tastefully decorated with shrubs and flowers, for a supper and ball, to which most of the respectable families in the county were invited. It was a novelty in the county, and attracted much notice. A dissolution of parliament was soon expected, and this festivity was thought to be an introduction to a canvass for representing the county. Several other candidates were spoken of, particularly Sir John Whitefoord, then residing at Cloncaird, commonly pronounced Glencaird, and Mr. Boswell, the well-known biographer of Dr. Johnson ('the meikle Ursa-Major'). The political views of this festive assemblage, which are alluded to in the ballad, if they ever existed, were laid aside, as Mr. Cunninghame did not canvass the county."—GILBERT BURNS.

O wha will to Saint Stephen's House,
 To do our errands there, man?
 O wha will to Saint Stephen's House,
 O' th' merry lads o' Ayr, man?
 Or will we send a man o' law?
 Or will we send a sodger?
 Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
 The meikle Ursa-Major?

Come, will ye court a noble lord,
 Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
 For worth and honour pawn their word,
 Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man.

squires

Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
 Anither gies them clatter;
 Annbank, wha guess'd the ladies' taste,
 He gies a Fête Champêtre.

one gives
 talk

When Love and Beauty heard the news,
 The gay green-woods amang, man;
 Where gathering flowers and busking bowers
 They heard the blackbird's sang, man:
 A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
 Sir Politics to fetter,
 As theirs alone, the patent-bliss,
 To hold a Fête Champêtre.

dressing

Then mounted Mirth, on gleesome wing,
 O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
 Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
 Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man;
 She summon'd every social sprite,
 That sports by wood or water,
 On th' bonnie banks o' Ayr to meet,
 And keep this Fête Champêtre.

each
 wood

Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
 Were bound to stakes like kye, man;
 And Cynthia's car, o' silver fu',
 Clamb up the starry sky, man;
 Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
 Or down the current shatter:
 The western breeze steals thro' the frees,
 To view this Fête Champêtre.

cows

climbed

How many a robe sae gaily floats!
 What sparkling jewels glance, man!
 To harmony's enchanting notes,
 As moves the mazy dance, man.
 The echoing wood, the winding flood,
 Like Paradise did glitter,
 When angels met, at Adam's yett,
 To hold their Fête Champêtre.

gate

When Politics came there, to mix
 And make his ether-stane, man!¹
 He circled round the magic ground,
 But entrance found he nane, man:
 He blush'd for shame, he quat his name,
 Forswore it, every letter,
 Wi' humble prayer to join and share
 This festive Fête Champêtre.

adder-stone

renounced (quitted)

¹Certain small annular stones with streaked colour- | superstitious to be produced by adders and to have
 ing are called adder-stones, and were supposed by the | magical powers.

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SONG—THE DAY RETURNS, MY BOSOM BURNS.¹

TUNE—"Seventh of November."

"I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world, Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, and his lady. At their fireside I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in the country put together; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours in my life."—*Burns' notes to Johnson's Museum.*

The day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,
Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer-sun was half sae sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more,—it made thee mine!

While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature aught of pleasure give;
While joys above my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of life below
Comes in between to make us part;
The iron hand that breaks our band,
It breaks my bliss,—it breaks my heart.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.²

As to the origin of these lines see letter of Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, September 27th, 1788.

Fate gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierc'd my darling's heart:
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour'd laid:
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

¹ The song is transcribed into a letter to Miss Chalmers, dated 16th September, 1788. The air, which displays very little musical talent, is the composition of Mr. Riddell himself, who named it from the day of his marriage, The Seventh of November.

² Burns says himself:—"The 'Mother's Lament' was composed partly with a view to Mrs. Fergusson of Craigdarroch, and partly to the worthy patroness of my early unknown muse, Mrs. Stewart of Afton." Mrs. Fergusson's son died November 19, 1787, at the

age of eighteen, after leaving college. Mrs. Stewart of Stair, the early patroness whom Burns had complimented in the "Brigs of Ayr," lost her only son, Alexander Gordon Stewart, only some days later (at Strassburg, 5th December, 1787); and the circumstances of the two mothers resembling each other so closely it is not to be wondered at that Burns inclosed a copy of this lament to Mrs. Stewart also, without subjecting himself to the charge of cheap sympathy and idly-feigned poetic pains.

The mother-linnet in the brake
 Bewails her ravish'd young;
 So I, for my lost darling's sake,
 Lament the live-day long.
 Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
 Now, fond I bare my breast,
 O, do thou kindly lay me low
 With him I love, at rest!

SONG—THE LAZY MIST.

TUNE—"The Lazy Mist."

This song, along with the preceding, was inclosed in a letter to Dr. Blacklock, dated 15th November, 1788, and containing the remark concerning them: "I have only sent you two melancholy things, and I tremble lest they should too well suit the tone of your present feelings."

The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
 Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
 How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear,
 As autumn to winter resigns the pale year!

The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
 And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
 Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
 How quick time is flying, how keen fate pursues!

How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd in vain!
 How little of life's scanty span may remain!
 What aspects, old Time, in his progress, has worn!
 What ties, cruel fate in my bosom has torn!

How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
 And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
 This life's not worth having with all it can give,
 For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

END OF VOL. II.

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