Robt Burns

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SELECTIONS FROM WORDSWORTH. With Notes.

WORDSWORTH'S PREFACES AND ESSAYS ON POETRY. With Notes.

SELECT POEMS OF ROBERT BURNS. With Notes.

TENNYSON'S PRINCESS. With Notes.

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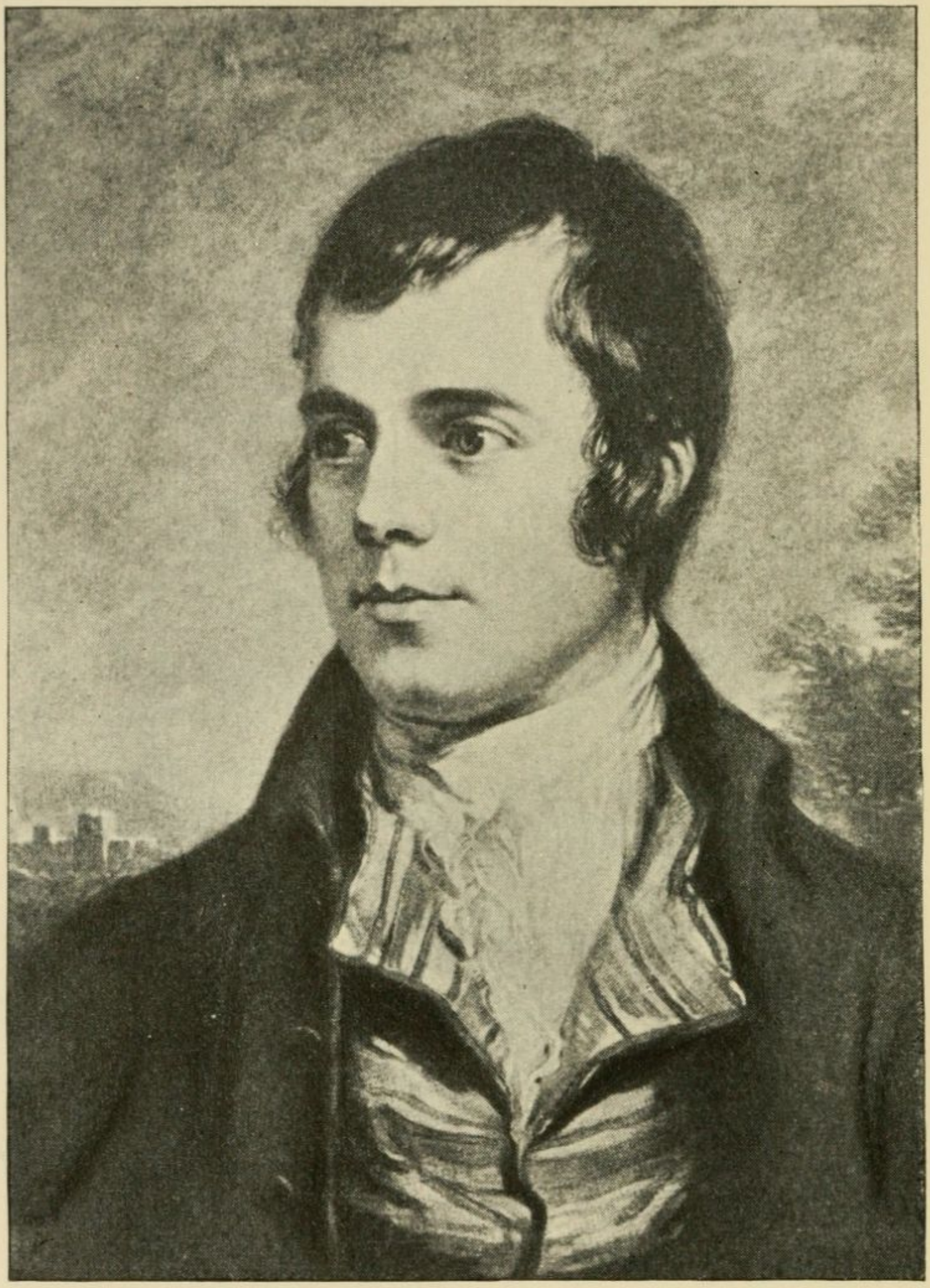
SYLLABUS OF ENGLISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE.

In Preparation.

Wordsworth's Excursion and White Doe of Rylstone.
Select Poems of Coleridge.
The History and Literature of Scotland:
I. The Highlands. II. Border.



SELECT POEMS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

WITH

INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND A GLOSSARY

BY

ANDREW J. GEORGE, M.A.

'Ae night i' the gloaming, as late I passed by,
A lassie sang sweet as she milkit her kye,
An' this was her sang, while the tears down did fa',
O there's nae bard o' Nature sin' Robin's awa'."

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1896

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PRESSWORK BY S. J. PARKHILL & CO.

12 vv. Feb. 29, 1904
Read.

TO

ROBERT HUDSON GEORGE.

A Lad who loves Burns.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

SCOTLAND may well be proud when she remembers the children who have shed such lustre upon her land of mist-shrouded mountains, of peaceful and solemnly beautiful valleys, of storied and romantic streams. From the Valley of the Ettrick to Nithsdale, from Ben Lomond to Criffel's hoary top, from St. Mary's Loch to the banks and braes of the Doon, one finds, —

"Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength,
And age to wear away in."

Here nature and man work together in producing for the attentive and the sympathetic an eloquence of glorious and bewitching sights and sounds, of beautiful and ennobling reflections.

"And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?"

In a single century Scotland has enriched the blood of the world with the nobility and fascination of Scott, the passion and pathos of Burns, the vision and message of Carlyle, the sweetness and simplicity of Dr. John Brown, the health and hope of Shairp, the intellectual and moral vigor of Blackie, and the joyousness and grace of Stevenson: even now she has children who are the delight of her home, and who are nobly loyal to the mother's teaching and the mother's example.

The Muse of Coila early introduced into her mysteries the most wayward and most loving, the most passionate and most penitent, of this various and richly endowed family; and finally she crowned him laureate of her native land.

"'Wear thou this,' she solemn said,
And bound the holly round his head."

That Robbie Burns is the idol of Scotland few who have had the privilege of knowing the Scotch people will venture to gainsay; and hence it is worth our while to study the forces at work in Scottish life and literature which contributed to the fashioning of such a character.

On Aug. 18, 1803, the day after Wordsworth and his sister had visited the grave of Burns in the churchyard of Dumfries, they were wandering on the banks of the Nith, and reviewing the life and work of the Ploughman Poet, when they gave utterance to the most distinctly human note in literary criticism that had hitherto been heard. It was a prophecy of what the method and the function of criticism in the nineteenth century were to be.

"Leaving each unquiet theme,
Where gentlest judgment may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair;
. . . . . .
Think rather of those moments bright,
When to the consciousness of right,
His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight,
And Virtue grew."

Standing as we do, a century away from the death of Burns, we are getting a truer perspective of his life and mission; we are coming to understand those subtle forces which played in and around his varied and eventful life, and which created the first fine careless rapture.

The influences which quicken and nourish poetic genius are often as silent and unobtrusive as those which sun and dew exert upon the growing plant. This analogy is strikingly suggestive in the case of Burns. For us, whose tables are loaded with the literature of prose and verse, and in whose education the poets play so great a part, it is difficult to imagine a time when books were scarce, and when the literary poets played but little part in the life of the people. But we have only to go back to the middle of the last century to find just such a condition, both in England and in Scotland. In both nations literary poetry was of little influence with the people, but as if to compensate for this lack of power there was a noble revival of popular song and ballad. Percy's *Reliques* and Herd's *Collection of Scottish Songs* stimulated interest in —

"Old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago."

or in —

"Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again."

Burns was thus fortunate in the time and place of his birth —

"Our Monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar win'
Blew hansel in on Robin."

His stormy advent into the world was but the prelude to a still more turbulent life among men; yet out of this storm and turbulence was generated a poetry sweetly simple, grandly virile, nobly human. It was his mission to teach —

"How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth."

The atmosphere of the home in which he grew up was charged with the rapture and the religion of popular song. These songs,

which came to him from his mother as she rocked his cradle, from old Jenny Wilson who beguiled his youth, and later from Ramsay and Fergusson, touched every fibre of his nature, and made it vibrate to the personal note of each.

"Fresh as the flower whose modest worth
He sang, his genius 'glinted' forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams."

Murdock, the accomplished teacher of Burns, says that in the two-roomed cottage, that tabernacle of clay, there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. Burns inherited from his father a love of justice — which gave even the 'Deil' his due — a deeply religious nature, strength, and pride; and from his mother, a handsome face, laughing dark eyes, sweet voice, tender sensibility, and winsome manner. "The magic of that presence," says Charles Kingsley, "made Burns both tempter and tempted, and may explain many a sad story." Created with such a nature, and endowed with such faculties, he was foreordained to restore the element of passion, the personal note to our poetry.

The interest which his work has for us is first of all Personal, as it is a revelation of his own joys and sorrows, hopes and fears; then the interest becomes National, when it voices the passion and the pathos of the people; and lastly it becomes Universal, in that it reflects the general heart of human kind.

This Ayrshire singer restored the personal note — *passion* — to our poetry; he purified, dignified, elevated, and enriched Scottish song, and made it distinctly national; he rose above the personal and the national into the sphere of the universal, by the sincerity, variety, and depth of his love of man.

Our homely New England poet has selected the personal in Burns's work as its chief title to immortality. He says: —

"Give lettered pomp to teeth of time,
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;
Blot out the epic's stately rhyme,
But spare his Highland Mary."

It is the characteristic of lyric poetry that it is personal not only, but passionate. Given, therefore, Burns's intense, almost volcanic, nature, set in an environment of song, and we can be sure that a prince of lyrists will be evolved. When we read those verses which he wrote before the thought of publishing came to him, and when he rhymed for fun, we get the clearest revelation of the man.

Now, this personal note comprises three great subjects, — Nature, Man, and God, and reveals itself as the poet's art, his politics, and his religion. Fortunately for us and for Burns these interests had never been absent from the poetry of Scotland; it had always reflected the lights and shadows of the landscape, the aims and aspirations of the people; it was beautiful, social, religious.

In the earliest raptures of the Scottish Gael as he prepared for the combat or returned victorious over his enemy; in the later and more subdued note of love for nature and man; and, in the latest of all, in the deep despair of the race as it fades away before the inevitable, — we find a revelation of man's varied interest and activity.

In the following description of Cuchullin, the leader of the warriors of Ulster, we have the rapidity, the directness, the simplicity, and the nobility of Homer: —

"In the chariot is seen the chief,
True, brave son of the keen-cutting brand,
Cuchullin, of blue dappled shields,
Son of Semo, renowned in song.

His cheek like the polished yew;
Clear, far-ranging his eye,
Under arched, dark, and slender brow;
His yellow hair down-streaming from his head,
Falls round the glorious face of man,
As he draws his spear from his back."[1]

In the *Aged Bard's Wish* we get the intense love of nature and the magical charm so characteristic of the Gaelic.

"O place me by the purling brook
That wimples gently down the lea,
Under the old tree's branchy shade,
And thou, bright sun, be kind to me.

Where I may hear the waterfall,
And the hum of its falling wave,
And give me the harp, and the shell, and the shield,
Of my sires in the strife of the brave."[2]

In the latest of the bards, Duncan Ban, "Fair Duncan of the Songs," as the Highlanders call him, we have an artist whose delight is to sketch the deer, the fox, and the roe:—

"Tis a nimble little hind,
Giddy-headed like her kind,
That goes sniffing up the wind
In her scorning;
With her nostrils sharp and keen,
Somewhat petulant I ween,
'Neath the crag's ruin she is seen
In the morning;
For she feareth to come down
From the broad and breezy crown
Of Ben Dorain,
Lest the hunter's cruel shot
In the low encircled spot
Should be pouring.

[1] Dr. Clerk. [2] J. S. Blackie.

She hath breath in breast at will
As she scampers o'er the hill
Without panting, —
Ruddy wealth of healthy blood
From the lusty fatherhood
Of Ben Dorain's antlered brood
Finely vaunting." [1]

It was such work as this that won for him in our day the title "The Burns of the Highlands." In his *Last Leave-taking of the Mountains*, written after his farewell visit to the old resorts of Glenorchy in 1802, we hear the pathetic wail of a race slowly passing from its native glens.

"Yestreen as I walked the mountain
O the thoughts that arose in me;
For the people I loved that used to be there
In the desert, no more could I see.
When I looked round on every side,
How could I feel but drear!
For the woods and the heather all were gone,
And the men were no longer there.

My farewell then to the forests,
And the marvellous mountains there,
Where the green cresses grow, and the clear wells flow,
Draughts gentle, and kingly, and fair.
Ye pastures beyond all price!
Wilderness wide and free,
On you, since I go to return no more,
My blessing forever be." [2]

"The Celt's quick feeling for what is noble and distinguished gave his poetry style [says Matthew Arnold]; his indomitable personality gave it pride and passion; his sensibility and nervous exaltation gave it a better gift still, — the gift of rendering with wonderful felicity the magical charm of nature. Magic is just the word for it, — the magic of nature, her weird power and her fairy charm."

[1] J. S. Blackie. [2] J. C. Shairp.

The poetry of the Highlands was the folk-song and the ballad; that of the Lowlands was of two varieties, — literary and popular. The literary impulse came from Chaucer through James I.; but the popular poetry — the song and ballad — was the product of the soil. Beginning with the unknown minstrel of the border, and continuing in Ramsay and Fergusson, it culminated in Burns and Scott. That the influence of the Highland song and ballad upon the spirit of the Lowlands was considerable, there can be but little doubt; it certainly cast some glorious gleams, such as the far-off Highland Bens reflect upon the plains and lowlier hills of the south.

The Celt powerfully affected English poetry. Mr. Arnold says, —

"It is in our poetry that the Celtic part in us has left its traces clearest. If I were asked where English poetry got these three things, — its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic, for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully new and vivid way, — I should answer with some doubt that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source; with no doubt at all that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic."

How much more, then, must have been the Celtic influence upon Lowland Scotch.

We must not forget that the chief Celtic influence upon the Lowlands was that of the Cymri. The Cymri, under the leadership of the British Guledig, Arthur, founded the kingdom of Strathclyde in the sixth century. Here Arthur fought his twelve great battles for Celtic independence; and here arose that mighty impulse to romance which, coincident with the defeat and exile of the Cymri of the Tweed, gradually revealed itself in that cycle of Arthurian legends which has fed the imagination of the modern world.

Here, too, in the early conflict of Christianity with heathenism, there arose the weird and fascinating figures, Merlin, St. Cuthbert, and St. Kentigern, who live and move in a halo of religious mysticism, and who, by the genius of Scott, have made Whitby, Lindsfarne, and Melrose sacred in history and poetry.

Prof. Veitch says: —

"Our life is continuous with theirs: perhaps it is so through blood and imaginative impulses, which now and again have made their appearance in the course of our literature, in our sentiment, in our melancholy and despair, and in our defiant protest against the despotism of fact in the interests of memory, or of a higher ideal. If we wish to recur to the fountain whence have sprung Arthurian tradition and its accompanying weird and heroic ideals, if we wish to see the first outwellings of that romance which has raised us above self and commonplace and conventionalism, which has influenced English poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson, we must go back to that Cymric people who loom so dimly in the early dawn of our history, who showed a spirit of defence, who suffered so greatly and bore so patiently, and in exile longed so grandly and hoped so nobly for the sight of their native hills. The fountains of romance for Britain and for Europe first opened amid the southern uplands of the kingdom of Strathclyde."

When the riches of this noble house, and of that sister house of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, awaited union in a royal heir, there came a peasant lad from the "auld clay biggin'" in Ayrshire, who, with the simple and graceful dignity of one of nature's noblemen, claimed his own, and there was added a new hereditary peer to the House of Fame. The new heir used these riches not like a prodigal, but with prudence and diligence, and left them to his successor increased by the usury of genius. He had added "the light, the gleam, that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the poet's dream."

It is of importance that we recognize the fact that in Burns

the two literary estates, English and Scottish, were united. Until his time there was a sharp distinction between Scottish and English literature; but after him the literature of the two countries became one, both in nature and in name. This was but natural when we consider that something of the original impulse which moved Burns's genius was English. Professor Minto says: —

"Burns's poetry is not a mere freak of nature, a thing *sui generis*, but an organic part of the body of English literature, with its attachments or points of connection only slightly disguised by difference of dialect. It drew its inspiration from literature, and it became in its turn a fruitful source of inspiration to two great poets of the next generation, — Wordsworth and Byron."

Let us now see what Burns himself says of the inheritance which came to him. He says: —

"What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars, and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's Works, some plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on *Agriculture*, *The Heathen Pantheon*, Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Allan Ramsay's Works, and a select collection of English songs, formed the whole of my reading."

To Robert Ainslie he wrote: —

"Let me quote you my two favorite passages, which, *though I have repeated them ten thousand times*, still they rouse my manhood and steel my resolution like inspiration: —

'On Reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.'

YOUNG.

'Here, Alfred, hero of the state,
Thy genius Heaven's high will declare;
The triumph of the truly great
Is never, never to despair!
Is never to despair!'

THOMSON: *Masque of Alfred*."

Again he says: —

"My favorite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his *Elegies;* Thomson's *Man of Feeling*, a book I prize next to the Bible; *Man of the World;* Sterne, especially his *Sentimental Journey;* Macpherson's *Ossian*, etc. These are *glorious models*, after which I endeavor to form my conduct; and 'tis incongruous, 'tis absurd, to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at their sacred flame; the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race, he who can soar above this little scene of things — can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræfilial race fret and fume and vex themselves! Oh, how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor, insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and 'catching the manner, living as they rise,' whilst the men of business jostle me on every side as an idle incumbrance in their way."

At another time he writes: —

"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's beginning, —

'How are thy servants blest, O Lord!'

I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear, —

'For though in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave'" —

The second, or National, character of Burns's poetry is quite as logically the result of his environment as was the personal. Most of the popular poetry of Scotland had been born in conflict, political or religious; and as a natural consequence Burns became a reformer and a patriot. He writes of some early influences in this direction as follows: —

"The first two books I ever read in private, which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were *The Life of*

Hannibal and *The History of William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

Perhaps Burns's chief claim to national recognition lay in what he did to preserve the native Scottish dialect from passing into disuse, and to make it classical. He gave it much the same relation to English as that which the Doric held to Attic Greek. Of his work here Emerson says: —

"He grew up in a rural district, speaking a *patois* unintelligible to all but natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. It is the only example in history of a language made classic by the genius of a single man. But more than this. He had that secret of genius to draw from the bottom of society the strength of its speech, and astonish the ears of the polite with these artless words, better than art, and filtered of all offence through his beauty. It seemed odious to Luther that the Devil should have all the best tunes; he would bring them into the churches; and Burns knew how to take from fairs and gypsies, blacksmiths and drovers, the speech of the market and street, and clothe it with melody."

On the publication of the first edition of his poems at Kilmarnock, in 1786, his national fame began; and when this was followed by his visit to Edinburgh, and the second edition of his poems, printed in 1787, his national recognition was complete: he became the observed of all observers throughout old Scotia.

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop the poet writes: —

"The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it my most exalted ambition."

"At this time [says Professor Shairp], there was a set of literary

men in Edinburgh who as to national feeling were entirely colorless, — Scotchmen in nothing except their dwelling-place. The thing they most dreaded was to be convicted of a Scotticism. Among these learned cosmopolitans in walked Burns, who, with the instinct of genius, chose for his subject that Scottish life which they ignored, and for his vehicle that vernacular which they despised, and who, touching the springs of long-forgotten emotions, brought back on the hearts of his countrymen a tide of patriotic feeling to which they had long been strangers."

Lockhart says: —

"Burns revived Scottish nationality which was falling asleep on the graves of the Stuarts."

By thus placing the Lowland vernacular upon a national basis, by making it, and the sentiments it revealed, classic, Burns secured his title to Universality. Through him Scotland's hills and vales, her woods and streams, her men and women, became the friends of the race; and a new world of sights and sounds, of joys and sorrows, was brought to every reader of his work.

"We love him, praise him, just for this:
In every form and feature,
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,
He saw his fellow-creature."

When we find that the poets more than any other teachers reveal us to ourselves by revealing the unity of the race in the brotherhood of admiration, hope, and love, we take them to our hearts, and they become the most potent forces in our education, — all the more potent because silent and unobtrusive. Emerson says: —

"Every man's, every boy's and girl's head carries snatches of Burns's songs, and they say them by heart, and, what is strangest of all, never learned them from a book, but from mouth to mouth. The wind whispers them, the birds whistle them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes

hoarsely rustle them, nay, the music-boxes of Geneva are framed and toothed to play them, the hand-organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeat them, and the chimes of bells ring them in spires. They are the property and solace of mankind."

The years 1785 and 1786 are memorable in the history of English poetry; for they mark the first culmination of that movement toward Nature, Man, and God which began in England with Gray and Goldsmith, and in Scotland with Ramsay and Thomson.

In 1785 Cowper published *The Task*, and in 1786 Burns gave to the world the first edition of his poems. Each poet wrought at his task unconscious of the existence of the other. The one in the dewy meadows of Buckinghamshire, and the other on the Ayrshire hills, saw Nature as she had not been seen since the time of Chaucer — in all her freshness and beauty — and by so revealing it made poetry simple and natural, strong and healthful, with the health and the strength of youth. Cowper —

> "Loved the rural walk through lanes
> Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep,
> And skirted thick with intertexture firm
> Of thorny boughs . . . . .
> O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink."

He loved to tend the hare which he had saved from the hunter, —

> "One sheltered hare
> Has never heard the sanguinary yell
> Of cruel man exulting in her woes.
> Yes — thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand
> That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
> At evening, and at night retire secure
> To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed."

Burns loved to wander, —

> "Whyles owre the linn the burnie plays,
> 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."

In the winter night when "doors and whinnock rattle" he thought —

"On the ourie cattle
Or silly sheep, wha bide the brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-laiving, sprattle
Beneath a scaur."

Again by revealing that the hearts as tender and true beat under hodden gray as under royal robes, these singers made poetry democratic:

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own."

COWPER.

"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God;'
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind."

BURNS.

And lastly, by teaching that God's love was revealed in nature, in animal life, and in man, that, —

"God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign we and they are his children, one family here."

They made poetry reflect, as never before, the religion of Christ.

The one indignantly protests: —

> "My ear is pain'd,
> My soul is sick with every day's report
> Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled;
> Man devotes his brother and destroys.
> And what man seeing this,
> And having human feelings, does not blush
> And hang his head to think himself a man?"

The other with his sweet sympathy for his erring brother says: —

> "Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
> Decidedly can try us,
> He knows each chord its various tone,
> Each spring its various bias;
> 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*."

I have said that these poets never met, and that each lived and loved and sang almost unconscious of the existence of the other. It seems that Cowper read Burns's poems in July, 1787, for he then wrote: —

> "I have read Burns's poems twice, and I think them on the whole a very extraordinary production. He is, I believe, the only poet these kingdoms have produced in the lower rank of life since Shakespeare who need not be indebted for any part of his praise to a charitable consideration of his origin, and the disadvantages under which he has labored."

How soon it was after the publication of Cowper's *Task* that it found Burns we cannot tell; but in 1795 he wrote his friend, Mrs. Dunlop, as follows: —

> "How do you like Cowper? Is not *The Task* a glorious poem? The religion of *The Task*, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and nature; the religion that exalts, that ennobles man."

In this centenary year, when lovers of Burns are vying with each other in manifestations of loyalty to his memory, I have wished to reveal my appreciation of him as a teacher of men by reproducing something of the old and true rather than by introducing anything strange and new. My experience of twenty years in teaching Burns has convinced me that he is one of the poets whose best work, by its inimitable magic of style and melody of verse, together with that absolute frankness and honesty of purpose which delights in being simple and natural, is admirably fitted to kindle in young people a love of simple pleasures and of home-bred sense which is the characteristic of the truly great of all time.

Because of the difficulty of selecting poems for class use, and because of the time lost in looking up the individual poems, which in various editions appear under different titles, I have at last decided to bring together such poems as I have found suitable for the class-room and the home. Burns more than any other English poet needs to be read in selections, for his work is exceedingly uneven both in form and content. I have endeavored to select such poems as by "truth and seriousness of subject, beauty and felicity of form," belong to the literature of *power*. I cannot hope to have included all that the special student of Burns would like, yet I trust that even he will not miss many of his favorites.

My end will be accomplished if the reader is led to make friends with this "lightly moved and all-conceiving spirit," and thus to become a lover of the matchless melody of a master of song.

In his verse and prose Burns is his own portrait-painter; the notes give to each poem its setting of natural, personal, and historical associations, out of which its pathos and power were created, and thus they are largely biographical. At the same time there is gathered a body of opinion in regard to the mission and message of Burns which may prove of value in con-

firming or correcting opinions already held. Such notes ought never to be *assigned* as a part of the study of Burns. If the pupil comes to them naturally from the reading of the text, well and good; they may then be of service; but unless this be the case they should be left unread. In that holy communion where there is reading that is worthy of the name, nothing should come between the pupil and the author. I believe with that clear-headed and stout-hearted Scot, John Stuart Blackie, that there is nothing so helpful towards the living a noble life "as a memory well stored with sacred texts, and an imagination well decorated with heroic pictures."

The teacher of English literature needs two qualifications above all others, — a passion for the subject, which is born of long and loving intimacy, and a willingness to keep himself in the background where he may constantly watch the direction and tendency of the pupil, only now and then interfering for the purpose of giving wider vision, or of intensifying the interest. If it be genius that is required to teach English literature, it is the genius which Alexander Hamilton describes when he says: —

> "All the genius I have lies just in this: when I have a subject in hand I study it profoundly day and night. It is a part of me; I explore it in all its bearings; my mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make people are pleased to call the fruit of genius; it is the fruit of labor and thought."

The story of the "architectonics" of poetry — its art and technique — has little place in the handling of Burns, who wrote not for the eye but for the ear. The essential difference between the songs of Burns and the songs of Tennyson — each perfect after its kind — is that the one is an inspiration, the other an art. If we compare the songs in the *Princess* with those in this volume, we shall see the distinction of kind clearly marked. Tennyson is the artist who consciously selects his subjects for definite purposes, fashions and refashions the verse,

which depends largely for its effectiveness upon what Mr. Stedman calls "the obvious repetends and singing bars, the stanzaic effect, the use of open vowel sounds and other matters instinctive with song-makers."

Tennyson says: —

"There was a period in my life when as an artist, Turner, for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature."

The mood of Burns, on the contrary, reminds us of that given by Plato in *Ion* when Socrates says: —

"All good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems, not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed; and as the Corybantian revellers, when they dance, are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains; but when falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed."

Listen now to Burns as he gives the occasion of one of his lyrics: —

"I had roved out, as chance directed, in the favorite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gayety of the vernal year. The evening 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 endeavor 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 hapless

nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but 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 fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye. What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain, dull, historic prose into metaphor and measure. The enclosed song was the work of my return home, and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene."

How unnatural it is to subject work done under such conditions to the analysis of the modern literary germ hunter. Let us be content to enjoy the things that such minds profess to understand, and if they demur at the principles here laid down let us reply with the youngest of our poets: —

"Ye hug the wealth ye cannot use,
And lack the riches all may gain, —
O blind and wanting wit to choose,
Who house the chaff and burn the grain!
And still doth life with starry towers
Lure to the bright, divine ascent! —
Be yours the things ye would: be ours
The things that are more excellent."

The local setting of the poems is partly from historical sources and partly the result of my visits to the land of Burns for the purpose of getting nearer to the heart of the poet and the scenes of his toil and his inspiration. In Ayrshire we come to know Burns as we cannot know him elsewhere; we shake hands with him, as it were, and feel the spell of his sweet, strong personality as we wander with him in the fields and woods, by the Nith and the Doon, or as we sit with him at a rockin' amang the neebors dear, and listen to the meickle fun which precedes the "hearty yokin at sang about."

"The study of such a genius [says Principal Tulloch], in all the fulness of its development and surroundings, in all its significance, — personal, intellectual, historical, — is a study of wide and ennobling extent, and would be found to make something of a real education for any one undertaking it thoroughly."

In an age of morbid introspection and analysis,

"Of fevered fancyings and of fretful lays,"

these poems of Burns, with their simplicity and homely objectivity, their tender and pathetic heart logic, reveal to us "A joy in widest commonalty spread," in which young and old, rich and poor, alike may share; they make the world a lovelier place, and life a diviner thing.

If errors, textual, historical, or biographical, are found in this edition, the editor will be glad to have his attention called to them.

A. J. G.

Brookline, Mass.
July 21, 1896.

INTRODUCTION.

"BURNS'S poems are but little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed romance of his earthly existence."

CARLYLE.

"The songs of Burns appeal to all ranks, they touch all ages, they cheer toilworn men under every clime. Wherever the English tongue is heard, whenever men of British blood would give vent to their deepest, kindliest, most genial feelings, it is to the songs of Burns they spontaneously turn, and find in them at once a perfect utterance, and a fresh tie of brotherhood."

J. C. SHAIRP.

"By the striking excellence of his own contributions, and by the exquisite tact with which he handled and improved traditional materials, Burns gave to Scottish lyrical literature a position in the estimation of intelligent Europe similar to that which Shakespeare holds in the literature of the drama."

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

"Yours is the talk of the byre and the plough-tail; yours is that large utterance of the early hinds. No poet since the Psalmist of Israel ever gave the world more assurance of a man."

ANDREW LANG.

"To homely subjects Burns communicated the rich commentary of his nature; they were all steeped in Burns; and they interest us not in themselves, but because they have been passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

"Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules mid winter snows, and where
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of man
His power survives."

WORDSWORTH.

"In Burns's poems we apprehend is to be found a truer history than any anecdote can supply of the things which happened to himself, and moreover of the most notable things which went on in Scotland between 1759 and 1796."

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

"As Burns's poems grew and breathed into being, the veil of the unknown was lifted, and Lowland Scotland, sweet and cheerful, came to light as when the sun rises over an undiscovered land. Scotland was the first object of his love, but after Scotland, mankind."

MRS. OLIPHANT.

"We shall never understand Burns aright if we do not grasp the fact that he was a 'folk-poet,' into whom the soul of a poet of all time and all space had entered."

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

"Every poet who, like Burns, increases that larger tenderness of the heart, which not only loves men, but hates to give pain to the lower animals, is, so far at least, religious in his poetry. No poet ever more deeply felt the sorrows of created things than Burns."

STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

"In Burns's poems is to be read clearly the lyric chronicle of all that went to make up the most moving tale of Robert Burns, which is surely to be read, if at all, only with sympathy and tears."

ERNEST RHYS.

"He came when poets had forgot
How rich and strange the human lot;
How warm the tints of life; how hot
Are Love and Hate;
And what makes Truth divine, and what
Makes manhood great."

WILLIAM WATSON.

"In homely Scots vernacular we are told by an Ayrshire ploughman authentic tidings of living instincts, of spontaneous belief, which not all the philosophy in the brain of the intellectual can banish from the breast of the human being."

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

"Give lettered pomp to teeth of time,
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;
Blot out the epic's stately rhyme,
But spare his Highland Mary."

WHITTIER.

"He spoke of Burns, — men rude and rough
Pressed round to hear the praise of one
Whose heart was made of manly, simple stuff
As homespun as their own."

LOWELL.

"Not Latimer, not Luther, struck more telling blows against false theology than did this brave singer. The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, The French Rights of Man are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns."

EMERSON.

"Burns was altruistic because his songs were those of his people. In his notes amid the heather, Scotia's lowly, independent children found a voice. It was his own, and it was theirs; he looked out and not in, or, if in, upon himself as the symbol of his kind. Of all our poets, lyric idyllic, he is most truly nature's darling; his pictures were life, his voice was freedom, his heart was strength and tenderness."

E. C. STEDMAN.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

OF

BURNS' POEMS.

PUBLISHED AT KILMARNOCK IN 1786.

THE following trifles are not the production of a Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary rules for commencing poetry by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press.

To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind — these were his motives for courting the muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he

does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, obscure, nameless bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honor to our language, our nation, and our species, that, "*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If our critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretension. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his subscribers, the author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom — to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others — let him be condemned without mercy to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION.

(*Second Edition, Edinburgh*, 1787.)

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen : —

A Scottish Bard, proud of name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service — where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land; those who bear the honors and inherit the virtues of their ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha — at the plough; and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes, and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue; I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honored protection; I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of these favours; I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to con-

gratulate my country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may Social Joy await your return. When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats; and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling, indignant glance; and may tyranny in the Ruler, and licentiousness in the People, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,
With the sincerest gratitude, and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted humble servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *April* 4, 1787.

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SELECT POEMS OF ROBERT BURNS.

1773 - 1783.

HANDSOME NELL.

TUNE—"*I am a Man unmarried.*"

O, ONCE I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Aye, and I love her still,
And whilst that virtue warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu' mien
The like I never saw.

A bonnie lass, I will confess
Is pleasant to the e'e,
But, without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
And what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel:
And then there's something in her gait
Gars onie dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul!
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

TUNE—"*Corn rigs are bonnie.*"

IT was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by, wi' tentless heed,
Till 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed,
To see me thro' the barley.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;

I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley;
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her owre and owre again
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely;
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She ay shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear;
I hae been happy thinking:
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

CHORUS.

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonnie:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

NOW WESTLIN WINDS.

TUNE—"*I had a horse, I had nae mair.*"

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
  Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
  Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
  Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night
  To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
  The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock loves the lonely dells;
  The soaring hern the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
  The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
  The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
  The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
  Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
  Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
  The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

But, Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,
  Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
  All fading-green and yellow:
Come let us stray our gladsome way,
  And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
  And ev'ry happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
  Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
  Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs
  Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be, as thou to me,
  My fair, my lovely charmer!

MY NANNIE, O.

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,
  'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
  And I'll awa' to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill;
  The night's baith mirk and rainy, O:
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
  An' owre the hill to Nannie, O.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

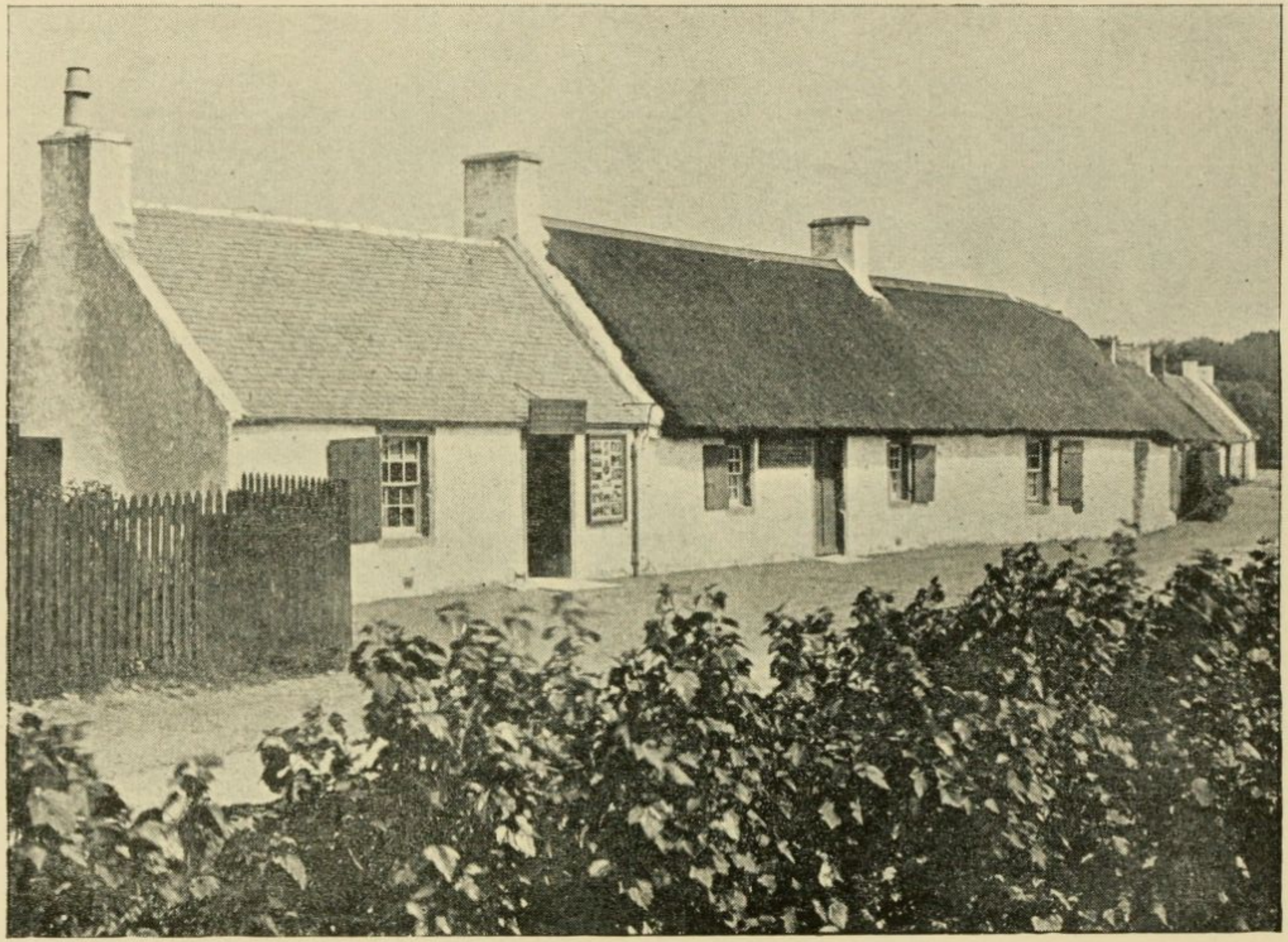
Her face is fair, her heart is true;
As spotless as she's bonnie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a', my Nannie, O.

Our auld Guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will send me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.



BURNS' COTTAGE, AYR.

MARY MORISON.

TUNE—"*Bide ye yet.*"

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That makes the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are nae Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

WINTER:

A DIRGE.

THE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter-day
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want, (Oh! do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

A PRAYER, UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU great Being! what Thou art
  Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
  Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
  All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
  Obey Thy high behest.

Sure, Thou, Almighty, canst not act
  From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
  Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
  To suit some wise design;
Then, man my soul with firm resolves
  To bear and not repine!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE, THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Was ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch;
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc he cam doytin by.
  Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it!
He gapèd wide, but naething spak.
At length poor Mailie silence brak.
  O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.
  Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!
  Tell him, he was a Master kin',

An' ay was guid to me an' mine ;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.
O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives !
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel :
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' ripps o' corn.
An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile wanrestfu' pets !
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great Forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers ;
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.
My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care !
An', if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast !
An' warn him, what I winna name.
To stay content wi' yowes at hame ;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.
An' niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string !
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop ;
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell,
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel !

And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your Mither,
Mind to be kind to ane anither.

Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail,
To tell my Master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blether.

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
An' clos'd her een amang the dead!

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last, sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;

Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense;
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie's dead.

Wa worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing — a rape!
It maks guid fellows grin an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye Bards on bonnie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon!
His Mailie's dead!

1784.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

A FRAGMENT.

CHORUS.

Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O!

THERE'S nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O,
Green grow, &c.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!
Green grow, &c.

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

. . . . . .

EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.

January — [1784].

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down, to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely, westlin jingle:
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,

I grudge a wee the Great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien an snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker,
To see their cursèd pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whyles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't:
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"
Auld age ne'er mind a feg;
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content would mak us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,

However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in making muckle, *mair:*
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,

We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay's the part ay,
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
Wi' never ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless, and fearless,
Of either heav'n or hell!
Esteeming, and deeming
It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;

They mak us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy·
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

O all ye pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my own dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,

Her dear idea brings relief
  And solace to my breast.
    Thou Being, All-seeing,
      O hear my fervent pray'r;
    Still take her, and make her
      Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
  The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
  Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
  In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
  A tie more tender still.
    It lightens, it brightens
      The tenebrific scene,
    To meet with, and greet with
      My Davie or my Jean.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin, rank and file,
  Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
  Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
  Till ance he's fairly het;

And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
An rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue his hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.

AULD NEEBOR,

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant, fren'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 and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld gray hairs.

But Davie, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;

And 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 daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think,
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commend me to the Bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin clink,
The devil-haet, that I sud ban,
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin',
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
An' while ought's there,
Then hiltie skiltie, we gae scrievin',
An' fash nair mair.

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

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie;
The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even tho' limpin' wi' the spavie
Frae door tae door.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war—

MILTON.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;

An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

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

I've heard my reverend Graunie 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.

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' wavin' sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick, quaick,
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
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.

Thence, contra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gaen
As yell's the Bill.

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young Guidmen, fond, keen, an crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,

Then, Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted Trav'llers 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,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
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,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog
Ye came to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be you fa!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reckit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz,
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke!

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl,
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fetchin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
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,
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!

Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake —
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

1785.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O THOU, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
And singin' there and dancin' here,
Wi' great an' sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
An' sometimes too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,

Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin arts,
Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

An' whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore.
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry an' pray'r,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
Upo' their heads;

Lord, visit them, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord, my God! that glib-tongued Aiken,
My vera heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood sweatin', shakin'
An' fill'd wi' dread,
While he wi' hingin' lip an' snakin'
Held up his head.

Lord, in the day o' vengeance try him;
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r;
But for thy people's sake, destroy 'em
An' dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me an' mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral an' divine,
That I for grace and gear may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
An' a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

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.

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,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

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.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks 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' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What raging 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 makes an unco leeway.

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

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before you gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o'cases;

A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination —
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother Man,
Still gentler sister Woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin 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.

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

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,

I spy'd a man, whose agèd step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
Began the rev'rend Sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of Man.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
That Man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That Man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
  Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
  Supported in his right,
But see him on the edge of life,
  With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
  Show Man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of fate,
  In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
  Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh! what crowds in ev'ry land
  Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
  That Man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
  Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
  Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
  The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
  Makes countless thousands mourn!

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
  So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
  To give him leave to toil;

And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressèd, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my agèd limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasures torn;
But, Oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!"

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1, 1785.

While briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' paitricks scraichin loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom, in an unknown frien',
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin,
To ca' the crack and weave our stock in;
And there was muckle fun and jokin,
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin
At 'sang about.'

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;

Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark!"
They told me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't;
Then a' that ken'd him round declar'd
He had ingine,
That name excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude an' rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel,
Does weel enough.

I am nae Poet, in a sense,
But just a Rhymer, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;

Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk O Allan's glee,
Or Ferguson's, the bauld an' slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel,
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends, an' folks that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses — Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there ;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin water ;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart ;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish, warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack !
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers !

But to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle ;

Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON,

OCHILTREE.

May, 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
Your flatterin strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phrasin terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Ferguson, the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Ferguson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts
Ye Enbrugh Gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whiles they're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten bardies o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae Poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style;
She lay like some unkend-of isle,
Beside New Holland,
Or where wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Ferguson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon;

Yarrow an' Tweed, to mony a tune,
Owre Scotland's rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
Naebody sings.

Th' Ilissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in mony a tunefu' line!
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae Southron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our feerless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
Or glorious dy'd.

O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,

While thro' the braes the cushat croods
Wi' wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree,
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The muse, na Poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trottin burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive,
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, " my rhyme-composing brither ! "
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither :
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal :
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal !

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes ;
While moorlan' herds like guid, fat braxies ;
While Terra Firma, on her axis,
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice,
In Robert Burns.

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,

ENCLOSING A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED.

Sept. 17*th*, 1785.

WHILE at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in the gulravage rinnin scour ;
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Musie, tir'd wi' monie a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,

Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple countra bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack so sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse hell upon me.

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

There's Gaw'n, misca'd waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than monie scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus'd him;
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've us'd him?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honour bleed
By worthless skellums,

An' not a Muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

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 shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
But, twenty times, I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause,
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They tak religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an truth,
For what? to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, owre right an' ruth,
To ruin streicht.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotcht an' foul wi' monie a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
Wi' trembling voice I tune my strain
To join wi' those,
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain,
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground!
Within thy presbyterial bound,
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd,
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;

An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd ;
(Which gies ye honour,)
Even, Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

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

TO JAMES SMITH.

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of Life, and solder of Society!
I owe thee much. BLAIR.

DEAR Smith, the slee'st, paukie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts ;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

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 ;
An' ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair taen I'm wi' you.

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.

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

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.

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

This while my notion's taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent;

But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries, "Hoolie!
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensured their debtors
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

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

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

But why o' Death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound an' 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.

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!

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

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,

Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves:
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

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

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.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce wi' 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 Pow'rs ! and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

Gie dreeping roasts to countra Lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine Life-guards,
And Maids of Honour;
An' yill an' whisky gie to Cairds,
Until they sconner.

A Title, Dempster 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 pleased to keep me hale
I sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;

I jouk beneath Misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to Sorrow, Care, and Prose,
I rhyme away.

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

Nae hair-brain'd sentimental traces,
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
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattlin squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes —
Ye ken the road. —

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

SEE! THE SMOKING BOWL BEFORE US.

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.

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, &c.

HALLOWEEN.

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 Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
  On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
  Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove, to stray an' rove
  Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night;

Amang the bonnie, winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimplin, clear,
Where Bruce ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
An' haud their Halloween
Fu' blythe that night.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin:
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks maun a' be sought ance:
They steek their een, an' grape, an' wale,
For muckle anes, an' straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the Bow-kail,
An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throw'ther;
The vera wee things, toddlin, rin,
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the custocks sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

The lasses straw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn;
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kiutlin i' the fause-house
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordit nits
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' saucy pride,
An' jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
She says in to hersel:
He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never màir part;
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sàir heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie,
An' Mary, 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, an' swoor by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

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,
An' 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-clue throws then,
Right fear't that night.

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

Wee Jenny to her Graunie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, Graunie?
I'll eat the apple 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 worset apron
Out thro' that night.

"Ye little Skelpie-limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin,
As seek the foul Thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune?
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has got a fright,
An' liv'd an' di'd deleeret,
On sic a night.

Ae Hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
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' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night."

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.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin:
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass,
Come after me an' draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistl'd up 'Lord Lenox' March,'
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' 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 shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

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

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen
To winn three wechts o' naething;
But for to meet the Deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the Herd a pickle nits,
And 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',
Syne bauldly in she enters;
A ratton rattl'd up the wa',
An' she cry'd, Lord preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanced the stack he faddom't thrice
Was timmer-propt for thrawin:
He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome Carlin;
An' loot a wince, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As cantie as a kittlin:
But Och! that night, amang the shaws,
She gat a fearfu' settlin!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare three lairds' lan's met at a burn,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the brachens on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The Deil, or else an outler Quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
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.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three are ranged;
And ev'ry time great care is taen,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's-year did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
And unco tales, an' funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery;
Till butter'd So'ns, wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin;
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin
Fu' blythe that night.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past,
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!

Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

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,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy.

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

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.

The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The Curlers quat their roarin play,
An' hunger'd maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin-tree
The lee-lang day had tired me ;
And whan the day had clos'd his e'e.
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin ;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

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.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,

To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme proof
Till my last breath —

When click! the string the snick did draw;
And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin bright,
A tight, outlandish Hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

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

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

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace,"
Was strongly marked 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 scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie Jean
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else came near it.

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

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 race 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, mark him well!
Bold Richardton's heroic swell;
The Chief on Sark who glorious fell,
In high command;
And He whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,

I mark'd a martial Race, pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

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.

With deep-struck reverential awe
The learned Sire and Son 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.

Brydon's brave Ward I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a Patriot name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair;

A whisp'ring throb did witness bear,
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder Sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail! my own inspired Bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

Know, the great Genius of this land
Has many a light, aërial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As Arts or Arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

They Scotia's Race among them share,
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard — a darling care,
The tuneful art.

'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, 'mid the venal Senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,

To mend the honest Patriot lore,
And grace the hand.

And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
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's zeal-inspirèd 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 laborer'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, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely-caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;

Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

Or when the deep green-mantl'd Earth
Warm-cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

When youthful love, warm-blushing strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By Passion driven;

But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Colia's plains,
Became thy friends.

Thou can'st 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.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and 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 Scottish 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.

November chill blaws 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 hame-ward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flitcherin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an' eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door.
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,

Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strapp'n youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
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.

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."

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 perjur'd 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 healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:
The soupe their only Hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

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, 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" 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 heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
  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;
  Or 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 Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
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 stole;
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 enroll.

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 Heav'n 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,
"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!

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 blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, Oh, 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;
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!

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true's the Deil's in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
's a muckle pity.

The clachan yill had made me canty,
I wasna fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, kenn'd ay
Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glowr
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff, wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did foregather,
That pat me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang:
A three-taed leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its statue seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava,
And then its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

"Guid-een," quo' I; "Friend hae ye been mawin,
When ither folks are busy sawin?"
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length, says I, "Friend, whare ye gaun,
Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe — "My name is Death,
But be na fley'd." — Quoth I, "Guid faith,

Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie:
I red ye weel, tak car o' skaith,
See, there's a gully!"

"Gudeman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd,
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gies your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come gies your news;
This while ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an' shook his head,
"It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.

Sax thousand years are near-hand fled,
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scaur me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur me.

Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae well acquaint wi' Buchan
An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin
And pouk my hips.

'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain:
But deil-ma-care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortify'd the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
O' a kail-runt.

I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near-hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

And then, a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,

A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True Sal-marinum o' the seas;
The Farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fortis, what you please,
He can content ye.

Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus Spiritus of capons;
Or Mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd *per se*;
Sal-alkali o' Midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

Waes me for Johnny Ged's Hole now,"
Quoth I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
They'll ruin Johnnie!'

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says, "Ye needna yoke the pleugh.
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae-death,
By loss o' blood or want of breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap and pill.

An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce well-bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair."

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this 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,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,

While burns, wi' snawy wreeths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, — wee, helpless thing!
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering win'
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffl'd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole —

" Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now, united shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!
See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs 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-satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretched on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers, piles the drifty 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 undeservèd 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 craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

THERE WAS A LAD.

TUNE—"*Dainty Davie.*"

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

Robin was a rovin Boy,
Rantin rovin, rantin rovin;
Robin was a rovin Boy,
Rantin rovin Robin.

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.

The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' scho, "wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof,
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',
But ay a heart aboon them a';

He'll be a credit till us a',
We'll a' be proud o' Robin."

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

"Guid faith," quo' scho, "I doubt you, Sir,
Ye gar the lassies lie aspar,
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur,
So blessings on thee, Robin!"

Robin was a rovin Boy,
Rantin rovin, rantin rovin;
Robin was a rovin' Boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin.

1786.

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.

A GUID New-Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gane like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.

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

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

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

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, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

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-Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
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'.

When thou an' I were young and 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.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Where'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gart them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
In guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd briskit,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and riskit,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit:
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a':
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:

They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
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,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

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,
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.

THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearin thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

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,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for Cod.

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey'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,
An' stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,

An' in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,
Was made lang syne, — Lord knows how lang.
He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dike.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Ay gat him friends in ilka place;
His breast was white, his touzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung owre his hurdies wi' a swirl.
Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit;
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
An' there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

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.
Our Laird gets in his rackèd rents,
His coals, his kain, an' 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.
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 such like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
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.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh :
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and siclike,
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han'-darg, to keep
Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.
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 and hunger ;
But, how it comes, I never kend yet,

They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
An' buirdly chiels, an clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespeckit!
Lord, 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.
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!
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.
Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

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.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs;
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

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.

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' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young anes ranting thro' the house, —
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barket wi' them.

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 an' 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 —

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 *aye* or *no's* they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton* an' see the worl'.
There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he taks the rout,
To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Hunting amang groves o' myrtles:
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival Signoras.
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?
O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breaking o' their timmer,
Or speaking lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.
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.

CÆSAR.

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.
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:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themselves to vex them;

An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acre's till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy:
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' ev'n 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.
The men cast out in party-matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal-potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
Pore ower the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.
There's some exceptions, man an' woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloamin brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone,
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;
When up they gat, an' 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.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem.
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;

Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

TO A LOUSE,

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET, AT CHURCH.

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie!
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug an' tight;
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,
As plump and gray as onie grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fie,
How daur ye do't?

O, Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!

Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

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!

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

MAY, 1786.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither 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:

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.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked:
But Och! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye, free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony;
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it ;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it ;
I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing ;
But Och ! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile
Assiduous wait upon her ;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justify'd by honour ;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Not 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.

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 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' Heaven
Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear, amiable Youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may ye better reck the rede,
Than ever did th' Adviser!

A DREAM.

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's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birth-day Levee; and in his dreaming fancy, made the following ADDRESS.

GUID–MORNIN to your Majesty!
May heaven augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see;
A humble Bardie wishes!
My Bardship here, at your Levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By mony a lord an' lady;
"God save the King!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;
The Poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me! before a Monarch's face,
Ev'n *there* I winna flatter;

For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
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.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But Facts are cheels 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.

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.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace
Her broken shins to plaister;
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 with the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairges,)
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, God's sake! let nae saving-fit
Abridge your bonnie barges
An' boats this day.

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
And 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 an' subjection
This great birth-day.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please Ye,
Will Ye accept a compliment
A simple Poet gies Ye?
Thae bonny bairntime 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.

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
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
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowt's been known
To mak a noble aiver;
Sae, ye may doucely fill a Throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, Him at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,
Name sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribban at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the Keys of Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, troth! ye'll stain the Mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, I learn,
  Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley, stem and stern,
  Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
  Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
  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,
  An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
  For Kings are unco scant ay;
An' German Gentles are but sma',
  They're better just than want ay
    On onie day.

God bless you a'! consider now
  Ye're unco muckle dautet;
But, ere the course o' life be through,
  It may be bitter sautet:
An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
  That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
  The laggen they hae clautet
    Fu' clean that day.

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 markèd, 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 hear 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 past,
  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 hast 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.

O! 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'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

A PRAYER — O THOU DREAD POWER.

Lying at a reverend friend's house one night, the author left the following verses in the room where he slept.

O THOU dread Power, who reign'st above,
I know Thou wilt me hear;
When for this scene of peace and love,
I make my prayer 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 loving 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;
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 alway.

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!

FAREWELL TO THE BANKS OF AYR.

TUNE—"*Roslin Castle.*"

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 scattered 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;
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.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

TUNE — "*Ewe-bughts, Marion.*"

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic's roar?

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!

PRAYER FOR MARY.

TUNE—"*Blue Bonnets.*"

POWERS celestial, whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care:
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own;

Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down.

Make the gales you waft around her
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Soothe her bosom into rest:
Guardian angels, O protect her,
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
Make her bosom still my home.

MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

TUNE—"*The deuks dang o'er my daddy.*"

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.

CHORUS.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rushy, O,
I set 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!

The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Fareweel the glen sae bushy, O!
Fareweel the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O!

LINES ON MEETING WITH LORD DAER.

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.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests,
Wi' rev'rence be it spoken;
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord — stand out my shin;
A Lord — a Peer — 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.

But, O for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
And how he star'd and stammer'd,
When goavan, as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpin on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidling sheltered 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 marked nought uncommon.

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,
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

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.

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

TUNE—"*Ettrick Banks.*"

'TWAS even — the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang;
The zephyrs wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang:
In every glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seem'd the while:

Except where green-wood echoes rang,
  Amang 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 hair like nature's vernal smile,
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 a lonely wild:
But Woman, Nature's darling child!
  There all her charms she does compile;
Ev'n there her other works are foil'd
  By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

O, had she been a country maid,
  And I the happy country swain,
Tho' shelter'd 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 thirst 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 ev'ry day have joys divine,
  With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

TUNE—"*Miss Forbes's Farewell to Banff.*"

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
  The flowers decay'd on Catrine lee,
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
  But nature sicken'd on the ee.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
  Hersel in beauty's bloom the whyle,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,
  Fareweel the braes o' Ballochmyle!

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!

1787.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

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 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 Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven'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 vet'ran, 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 th' invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
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 ling'ring hours,
  I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

EPIGRAM AT ROSLIN INN.

My blessing on ye, sonsie wife,
  I ne'er was here before:
Ye've wealth o' gear for spoon and knife —
  Heart could not wish for more.
Heaven keep you clear o' sturt and strife,
  Till far ayont fourscore,
And while I toddle on thro' life,
  I'll ne'er gae by your door!

EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT.

GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE, ROXBURGSHIRE.

GUIDWIFE,
I MIND it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi' claivers, an haivers,
Wearing the day awa.

Ev'n 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 beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,

I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear:
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 core,
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 fired, inspired,
At ev'ry kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I feared aye to speak.

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 sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:

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.

For you, no bred to barn or byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;
'Twad please me to the nine.
I'd be more vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Farewell then, lang heal then,
An' plenty be your fa':
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'.

R. BURNS.

March, 1787.

COME BOAT ME O'ER TO CHARLIE.

TUNE—"*O'er the water to Charlie.*"

COME boat me o'er, come row me o'er,
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I'll gie John Ross another bawbee,
To boat me o'er to Charlie.

We'll o'er the water and o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

I lo'e weel my Charlie's name,
Tho' some there be abhor him:
But O, to see auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him!

I swear and vow by moon and stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I'd die as aft for Charlie.

We'll o'er the water and o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie!

INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMBSTONE

ERECTED BY BURNS TO THE MEMORY OF FERGUSSON.

"*Here lies Robert Fergusson, Poet,*
Born September 5th, 1751—
Died 16*th October*, 1774."

No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
"No storied urn nor animated bust;"
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust.

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.

TO A LADY

WHO WAS LOOKING UP THE TEXT DURING SERMON.

FAIR maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue:
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant,
Not *Angels* such as you!

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

CHORUS.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go, will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go to the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,
Come let us spend the lightsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The little birdies blythely sing,
While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

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,

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,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
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;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

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.

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 monie 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.

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 shelt'ring safe retreat,
From prone-descending show'rs.

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 charm
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;
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,
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 — "Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses!"

THE LOVELY LASS O' INVERNESS.

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, "alas!"
And aye the saut tear blins her e'e:
"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

Their winding sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For monie a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee."

CASTLE GORDON.

TUNE — "*Morag.*"

STREAMS that glide in orient plains,
Never bound by winter's chains!
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains

From Tyranny's empurpled hands:
These, their richly-gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle Gordon.

Spicy 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:
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.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

TUNE—"*The Shepherd's Wife.*"

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosèd bawk,
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,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning.
So thou, sweet Rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

TUNE—"*Andro and his cuttie gun.*"

CHORUS.

Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben:
Blythe by the banks of Ern,
And blythe in Glenturit glen.

By Ochtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks, the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
Blythe, &c.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She trippèd by the banks of Ern
As light's a bird upon a thorn.
Blythe, &c.

Her bonnie face it was as meek
As onie lamb's upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.
Blythe, &c.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I have been;
But Phemie was the blythest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.
Blythe, &c.

BANKS OF DEVON.

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!
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.

1788.

I LOVE MY JEAN.

TUNE—"*Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey.*"

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
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;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL!

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,
My Muse maun be thy bonnie sel;
On Corsincon I'll glowr and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day,
I could na sing, I could na say,
How much, how dear, I love thee.
I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting looks, thy roguish een —
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.
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'd love thee.

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Farewèll, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie:
M'Pherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree.

CHORUS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows tree.

Oh, what is death but parting breath?
On monie a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!
Sae rantingly, &c.

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 avengèd be.
Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame disdain his name,
The wretch that dare not die!
Sae rantingly, &c.

AULD LANG SYNE.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And auld lang syne!

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.

CHORUS.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

CAULD blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill's I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
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.

MY BONNIE MARY.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie.

The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's no the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar,
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

1789.

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.

[*April*, 1789.]

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go, live, poor wand'rer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains;
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.

THE HAPPY TRIO.

TUNE—"*Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.*"

O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

CHORUS.

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And monie a night we've merry been,
And monie mae we hope to be!
We are na fou, &c.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!
We are na fou, &c.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King among us three!
We are na fou, &c.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

TUNE — "*Miss Forbes' farewell to Banff.*"

THOU ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity cannot efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth:
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlánds, wherever I go.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

ELLISLAND, **21*st*** *Oct.*, 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you ay as weel's I want ye,
And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron south!
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tald mysel by word o' mouth,
He'd tak my letter;
I lippen'd to the chiel in trouth,
And bade nae better.

But aiblins honest Master Heron
Had, at the time, some dainty fair one,
To ware his theologic care on,
And holy study;
And tired o' sauls to waste his lear on,
E'en tried the body.

But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
I'm turn'd a gauger — Peace be here!
Parnassian queens, I fear, I fear
Ye'll now disdain me!
And then my fifty pounds a year
Will little gain me.

Ye glaiket, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha by Castalia's wimplin streamies,
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is —
I need na vaunt,
But I'll sned besoms — thraw saugh woodies,
Before they want.

Lord help me thro' this warld o' care!
I'm weary sick o't late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than monie ithers;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brithers?

Come, Firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair;
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
(I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time,)

To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky,
I wat she is a daintie chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
I'm yours for ay.

ROBERT BURNS.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS THRO' SCOTLAND,

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groats;—
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chiel's amang you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel —
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, Lord save's ! colleaguin
At some black art. —

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chamer,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
And you deep read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches,
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled ;
But now he's quat the spurtle-blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And taen the — Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets :
Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont gude ;
And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder ;
Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender ;
That which distinguishèd the gender
O' Balaam's ass ;

A broom-stick o' the witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg
The cut of Adam's philibeg;
The knife that nicket Abel's craig
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie. —

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Gude fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the Powr's o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chiel, O Grose! —
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, "Shame fa' thee!"

TAM GLEN.

TUNE — "*The mucking o' Geordie's byre.*"

My heart is a breaking, dear Tittie,
Some counsel unto me com len',
To anger them a' is a pity;
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak a fen';
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I maunna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,
"Guid-day to you," brute! he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me guid hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou gied a sten:
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written, "Tam Glen."

The last Halloween I was waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam up the house staukin —
And the very gray breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry;
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

1790.

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses.)

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
An ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;

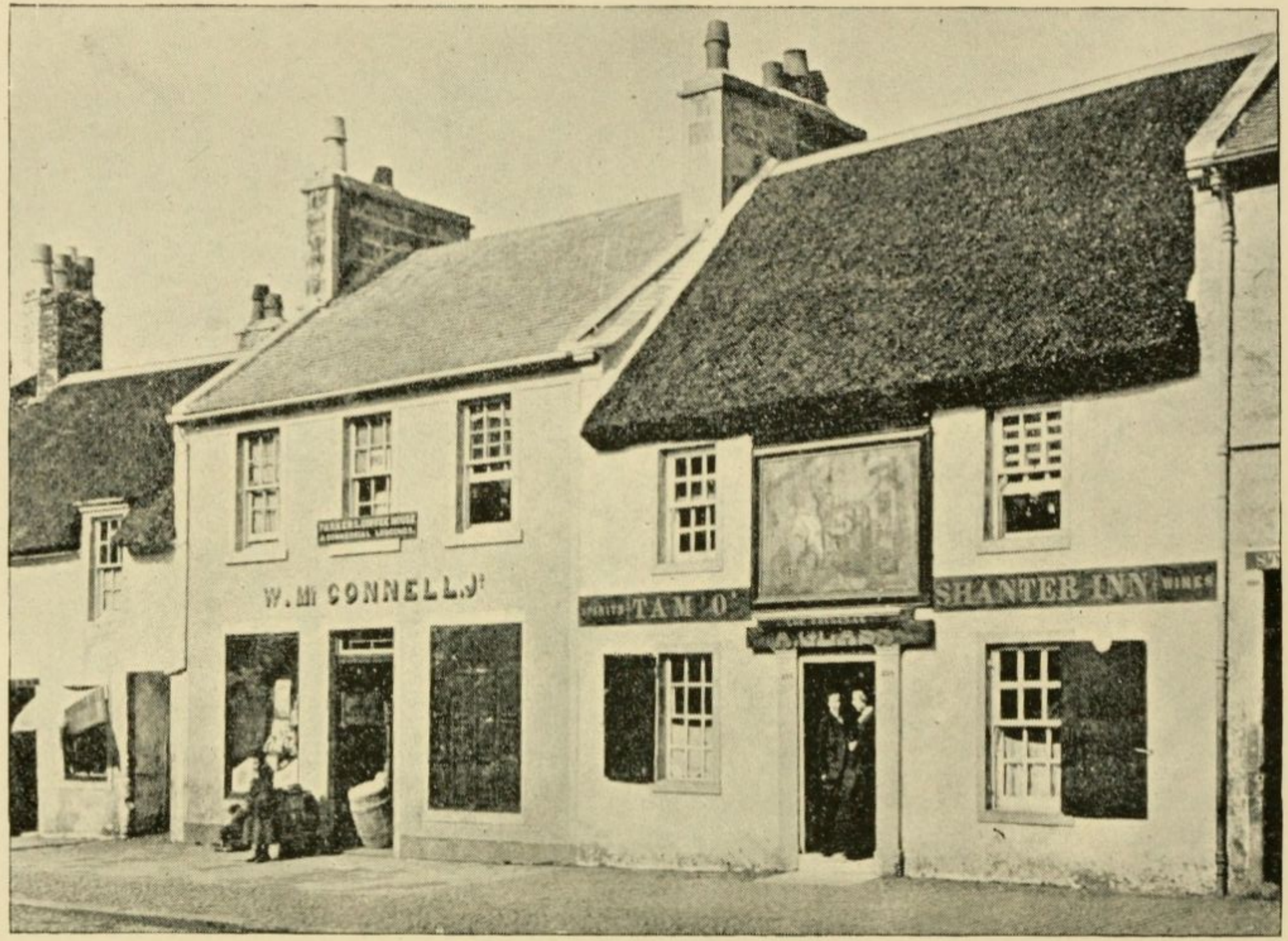
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.
Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!
But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.
Care, mad to see a man sae happy,

E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!
But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm. —
Nae man can tether time or tide; —
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he takes the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.
The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.
Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;

Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry. —
By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel. —
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing. —
Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil! —
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;

Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantraip slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;



TAM O'SHANTER INN.

They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!
  Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!
  But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwooddie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.
  But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear,)
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),

Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!
But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was, and strang,)
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When, "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skreech and hollow.
Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig:
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross.

But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

ELEGY ON CAPT. MATTHEW HENDERSON,

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heav'nly Light.

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurcheon hides,

And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing earns,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
Wi' toddlin din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lee;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines hanging bonilie,
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood;
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals,
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,

What time the moon, wi' silent glowr,
Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe;
And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou, simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear,
For him that's dead!

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou, winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou Sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

O Henderson! the man! the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever?
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound?
Like thee, where shall I find another,
The world around?

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep thee ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

TUNE—"*Robie Donna Gorach.*"

THE Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command:
When shall I see that honour'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here?

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom;

How sweetly wind thy sloping dales,
  Where lambkins wanton thro' the broom!
Tho' wandering, now, must be my doom,
  Far from thy bonnie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
  Amang the friends of early days!

1791.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
  On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
  Out-owre the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
  And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
  That fast in durance lies.

Now laverocks wake the merry morn,
  Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
  Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis mild wi' many a note,
  Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
  Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
  The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
  And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
  May rove thae sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
  Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
  Where happy I hae been,
Fu' lightly raise I in the morn,
  As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
  And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
  And never-ending care

But as for thee, thou false woman,
  My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
  That thro' thy soul shall gae:
The weeping blood in woman's breast
  Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
  Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
  Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
  That ne'er wad blink on mine!

God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

Oh! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

The wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely taen.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleachèd white wi' time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;

And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques o' the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours o' the agèd year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

I am a bending agèd tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

I've seen so many changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bare alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my agèd ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from fortune's mirkest gloom.

In Poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists, obscure, involv'd me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
No ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless Bard, and rustic song,
Became alike thy fostering care.

O! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen grey with time!
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime?

Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe?
O! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

THE BANKS O' DOON.

TUNE—"*The Caledonian Hunt's Delight.*"

YE banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate,
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver stole my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd on noon.

VERSION PRINTED IN THE MUSICAL MUSEUM.

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days,
When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the wood-bine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae off its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw the rose
But left the thorn wi' me.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGH-SHIRE, WITH BAYS.

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between;

While Summer with a matron grace
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade;

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his agèd head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed;

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,

Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows;

So long, sweet Poet of the year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

AFTON WATER.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

AE FOND KISS.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love, and Pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

1792.

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

The Deil cam fiddling thro' the town,
And danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman;
And ilka wife cry'd "Auld Mahoun,
We wish you luck o' your prize, man.

We'll mak our maut, and brew our drink,
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man;
And monie thanks to the muckle black Deil
That danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.

There's threesome reels, and foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to our lan',
Was — the Deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.
We'll mak our maut," &c.

HIGHLAND MARY.

TUNE — "*Katharine Ogie.*"

YE banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for ay the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

BESSIE AND HER SPINNIN-WHEEL.

TUNE—"*Bottom of the Punch Bowl.*"

O LEEZE me on my spinnin-wheel,
O leeze me on my rock and reel;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en!
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal,
O leeze me on my spinnin-wheel.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot;
The scented birk and hawthorn white,
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes' caller rest:
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
Where blythe I turn my spinnin-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays;
The craik amang the claver hay,
The paitrick whirrin o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinnin-wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flarin, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessie at her spinnin-wheel?

BONNIE LESLEY.

TUNE—"*The Collier's Bonnie Dochter.*"

O SAW ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And ne'er made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The Powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha'na steer thee;
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag, we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.

DUNCAN GRAY.

Duncan Gray came here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe Yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Time and Chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Meg grew sick — as he grew well,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

1793.

GALLA WATER.

Braw braw lads on Yarrow braes,
They rove amang the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes nor Ettrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Galla Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tocher;
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure.

WANDERING WILLIE.

HERE awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.
Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e;
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me!

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers;
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide-roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain.

JESSIE.

TUNE—"*Bonnie Dundee.*"

TRUE-HEARTED was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair:

To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain;
Grace, beauty, an' elegance, fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

Fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger!
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'.

THE SODGER'S RETURN.

TUNE—"*The Mill Mill O.*"

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning:
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder;

And for fair Scotia, hame again
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonnie glen,
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted:
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my King and Country lang —
Take pity on a sodger!

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever:
Quo' she, A sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never:
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,

That gallant badge, the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gaz'd — she redden'd like a rose —
Syne pale like onie lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie?
By Him who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded!

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
Quo' she, My grandsire left me gowd,
A mailen plenish'd fairly;
And come, my faithful sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly!

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize;
The sodger's wealth is honour:
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger,
Remember he's his country's stay
In day and hour o' danger.

LOGAN BRAES.

TUNE—"*Logan Water.*"

O LOGAN, sweetly didst thou glide
That day I was my Willie's bride;
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flow'ry banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes.

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and valleys gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers;
Blythe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy:
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan Braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings, sits the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile:
But I wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan Braes.

O wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye mak monie a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan Braes!

THERE WAS A LASS.

TUNE—"*Bonnie Jean.*"

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonnie Jean.

And ay she wrought her mammie's wark,
And ay she sang sae merrilie:
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;

And he had owsen, sheep and kye,
  And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
  He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
  Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

As in the bosom o' the stream
  The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love,
  Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.

And now she works her mammie's wark,
  And aye she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wistna what her ail might be,
  Or what wad make her weel again.

But didna Jeanie's heart loup light,
  And didna joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love,
  Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

The sun was sinking in the west,
  The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
  And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
  O canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
  And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

At barn or byre thou shaltna drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me.

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

TUNE—"*Hey tuttie tattie.*"

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.
Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa'?
Let him on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!
Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

SONNET,

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK IN JANUARY, WRITTEN 25TH JANUARY, 1793, THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE AUTHOR.

SING on, sweet Thrush, upon the leafless bough;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See agèd Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear
Sits meek Content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds the orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care;
The mite high Heav'n bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.

DAINTY DAVIE.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in the happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

CHORUS. — Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,

Then through the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' Nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my ain dear Davie.
Meet me, &c.

1794.

A VISION.

TUNE — "*Cumnock Psalms.*"

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa' flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care;

CHORUS.

A lassie, all alone was making her moan,
Lamenting our lads beyond the sea:
In the bluidy wars they fa', and our honour's
gane an' a',
And broken-hearted we maun die.

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;

The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roarings swell and fa'.

The cauld blae north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like Fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as Minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain
The sacred posy — Libertie!

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumbering dead to hear;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times;
But what he said — it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

HARK! THE MAVIS.

TUNE—"*Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes.*"

CHORUS.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rows,
My bonnie Dearie.

HARK! the mavis' e'ening sang
Sounding Clouden's woods amang,
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonnie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy-bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to Love and Heaven sae dear,

Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can die — but canna part,
My bonnie Dearie.
Ca' the yowes, &c.

A RED, RED ROSE.

TUNE — "*Red, red rose.*"

My luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my Dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my Dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare the weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

MY CHLORIS.

TUNE—"*My lodging is on the cold ground.*"

MY Chloris, mark how green the groves
The primrose banks how fair:
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings:
For Nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To Shepherds as to Kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe, in the birken shaw.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

The shepherd, in the flowery glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo;
The courtier tells a finer tale,
But is his heart as true?

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine:
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like mine.

THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

TUNE—"*Dainty Davie.*"

IT was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flowery mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

CHORUS.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody
They hail the charming Chloe;
Till, painting gay the eastern skies
The glorious sun began to rise,
Out-rival'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she, &c.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

TUNE—"*Rothiemurchie's Rant.*"

CHORUS.

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my Dearie O?

Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'll be my Dearie O?
Lassie wi', &c.

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
The wanton lambs at early morn,
Shall welcome thee, my Dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

And when the welcome simmer-shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my Dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way,
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my Dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my Lassie's midnight rest;
Enclaspèd to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my Dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE.

TUNE—"*Lumps o' Pudding.*"

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' Sorrow and Care,
I gie them a skelp as they're creepin' alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a soger, and life is a faught:

My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a';
When at the blythe end of our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way,
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is — "Welcome, and welcome again!"

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

TUNE — "*There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.*"

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless — my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drop and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn:
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie — my Nannie's awa.

Thou laverock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the gray-breaking dawn,
And thou, yellow mavis, that hails the night-fa',
Gie over for pity — my Nannie's awa.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay;
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me — now Nannie's awa.

1795.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-grey, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that:
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:

For a' that, an' a' that,
His riband, star, an' a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that),
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

TUNE—"*Push about the jorum.*"

April, 1795.

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the louns beware, Sir,
There's Wooden Walls upon our seas,
And Volunteers on shore, Sir.

The Nith shall run to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!
Fal de ral, &c.

O let us not like snarling curs
In wrangling be divided;
Till, slap! come in an unco loun
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!
Fal de ral, &c.

The Kettle o' the Kirk and State,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loun
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our Fathers' bluid the Kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;
By heaven, the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it.
Fal de ral, &c.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch his true-born brother,
Who would set the Mob aboon the Throne,
May they be damned together!

Who will not sing, "God save the King,"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing, "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget The People!

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

TUNE—"*Where'll bonnie Ann lie.*"

O STAY, sweet warbling woodlark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd
Sic notes o' wae could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

INSCRIPTION

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE LAST EDITION OF MY POEMS, PRESENTED TO THE LADY WHOM I HAVE SO OFTEN SUNG UNDER THE NAME OF CHLORIS.

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing Muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower,
(And ne'er Misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store —
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious Honour's part;

And, dearest gift of Heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every muse to rove:
And doubly were the Poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

TUNE—"*The hopeless lover.*"

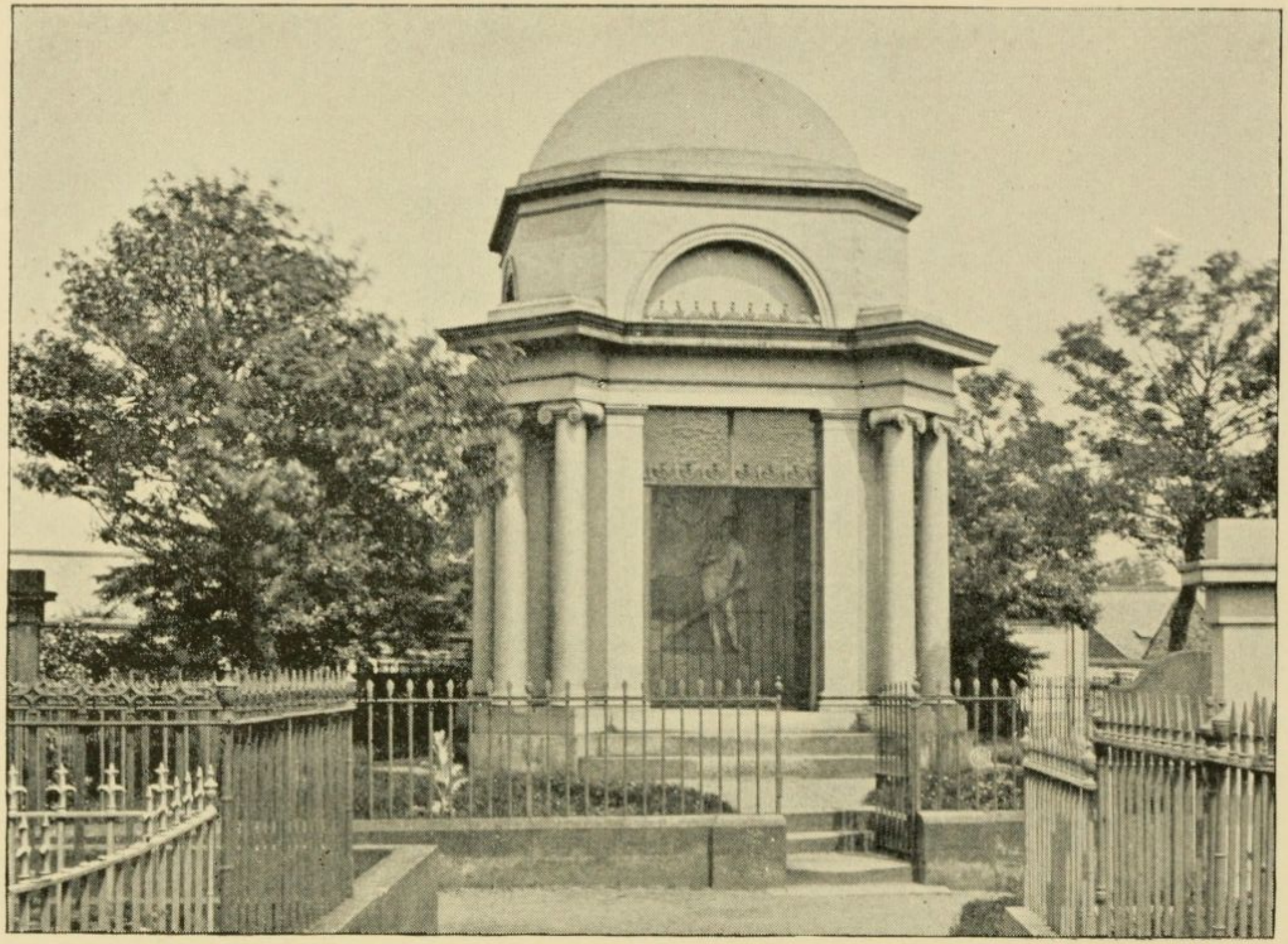
Now spring has clad the groves in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers;
The furrow'd waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe!

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was once that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountain dry.

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the withering blast
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blythe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching love in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland's snows
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "Hope nae mair!"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whose bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.



BURNS' MAUSOLEUM, DUMFRIES.

1796.

ALTHO' THOU MAUN NEVER BE MINE.

TUNE—"*Here's a health to them that's awa, Hiney.*"

CHORUS.

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art as sweet as the smile when fond lovers
meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

ALTHO' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I mourn thro' the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms:
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thy arms—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling e'e;
But why urge the tender confession
'Gainst fortune's cruel decree—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

TUNE—"*The Lass of Livingstone.*"

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast,
  On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
  I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
  Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
  To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
  Of earth and air, of earth and air,
The desart were a paradise,
  If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
  Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The only jewel in my crown
  Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

POEM ON PASTORAL POETRY.

HAIL, Poesie! thou Nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
  'Mang heaps o' clavers;

And och! o'er aft thy joes hae starv'd,
'Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, 'till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Marco's catches;
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace;
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan —
There's ane; come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' Time may gnaw Tantallan,
But thou's for ever!

Thou paints auld Nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lasses bleach their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel';
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits; but that sweet spell
O' witchin' love;
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

CHRONOLOGICAL.

1759–1786.

January 25, 1759.	Birth at Ayr, parish of Alloway.
1765.	School at Alloway Mill; with Murdock.
1766–1777.	**At Mount Oliphant,** parish of Ayr (1766).
1768.	Early associations on the farm. Taught at home by his father.
1769.	Books. Love and song. Jenny Wilson.
1777–1784.	**At Lochlea,** parish of Tarbolton.
1778.	School at Kirkoswald.
1780.	The Bachelors' Club.
1781.	Flax-dressing at Irvine.
1782.	Finds Fergusson's Poems.
1783.	A Freemason.
February, 1784.	His father's death.
1784–1786.	**At Mossgiel,** parish of Mauchline.
1785.	Early friends: Gavin Hamilton, Robert Aiken. Struggle with Auld Lichts. Poetic Springtide. Epistles. Satirical Poems. Descriptive Poems. Songs.

August, 1786.	Kilmarnock (first) edition of poems published.
	Literary friendships: Dr. Blacklock, Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blair, Rev. Mr. Laurie, Mrs. Dunlop.
	Visits Katrine, meets Lord Daer and Mrs. Stewart.

1786–1788.

November, 1786.	**Visits Edinburgh.**
	Among the celebrities.
April, 1787.	Second edition of poems.
	Travels in Scotland.
May	Border Tour.
June.	Returns to Mossgiel.
	First Highland Tour.
	Second Highland Tour.
	Third Highland Tour.
September.	**Returns to Edinburgh.**
	Johnson's Museum.
March, 1788.	Leaves Edinburgh.

1788–1796.

1788–1791.	**At Ellisland.**
August, 1788.	Marries Jean Armour.
	At Friar's Carse.
1790.	Appointed Excise Officer.
1791–1796.	**At Dumfries.** Bank Vennel.
	Dumfries Volunteers.
	Thomson's Collection.
1792.	Patriotic Songs.
1793.	Visits Galloway.
1794.	Removes to Mill Hill Brae.
	Failing Health.
July 21, 1796.	Death.

NOTES.

FIRST PERIOD. 1773–1786.

THE most natural divisions into which Burns's work may be divided are 1773–1786 and 1787–1796. In the first period, which closed with the publication of the first edition of his poems, we have the early love-songs, epistles, satires, and poems humorous and descriptive relating to rural life and manners. These are for the most part in the native Scottish dialect, and are simple, picturesque, and impassioned. In the second period we have mostly songs based upon the early minstrelsy. The occasion of many of these was the publication of Johnson's *Museum*, a collection of the best Scottish songs, and later a similar publication by Thomson. To these two works Burns was a frequent contributor. His three Highland tours were productive of the best results in the way of song. He visited the famous Highland fiddler and composer of Scotch tunes, Neil Gow, at his home on the Braan near Dunkeld. He also met Rev. John Skinner, the author of *The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn*, which had suggested to him the poems on Poor Mailie. It was by such intercourse that the old songs of Scotland became so prominent in his work of this period. He thus anticipated Scott in this field, — the one was a re-creator, the other a preserver. Some critics have attempted to decide upon the relative merits of the work in these two periods, but it is unprofitable business, as each is unique and perfect after its kind.

The work of each of these periods has a local color according as it is related to the three different centres. In the first we have work done at Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, and Mossgiel; in the second, that at

Edinburgh, Ellisland, and Dumfries. There is no English poet, except Wordsworth, whose work is so intimately associated with places. We may understand Dante without a visit to Florence, and Shakespeare even without a visit to Stratford; but Burns is so closely associated with the nature of the people and the beauty of the districts in which he lived, that something of his peculiar charm will be lost unless one appreciates the environment of places he has made classic.

1773–1783.

HANDSOME NELL.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THE poems composed at Mount Oliphant and at Lochlea are not many, but they reveal much that is of importance to the student of Burns. As the child is father of the man the later poems can be understood only by a thorough study of all the influences which were at work to mould the mind and heart of this peasant lad. The most powerful influence was that of love, and it is no wonder that Burns's first poem was a song of love. He tells us that the book most prized by him as a boy was an old song-book, which he carried with him wherever he went, whether he drove the cart, held the plough, tended the cattle, or toiled in the harvest-field. Then, too, his home was filled with influences the best possible for the development of his genius. It was a home of song. By song he was nursed; by it he grew to manhood; and by it his lyric genius was kindled. Not only was his song-craft thus created, but his critic-craft as well; for he says, "I carefully noted the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian." We must not forget that this was a period of severe toil and of the sternest self-denial, — "the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave." "My brother," says Gilbert, "at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal laborer on the farm." Carlyle has said that "our Scottish son of thunder had, for want of a better, to pour his lightning through the narrow cranny of Scottish song,

the narrowest cranny ever vouchsafed to any son of thunder." Was it so narrow a cranny after all?

The circumstances attending the birth of this song are given us in the poet's own words: —

"You know," he says, "our country custom of coupling a man and a woman together as partners in the labors of the harvest. In my fifteenth summer (1773) my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. 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. . . . Among her love-inspiring qualities she sang sweetly; and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who read Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song which was said to be composed by a country laird's son on one of his father's maids with whom he was in love, and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could shear sheep and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholarship than myself. Thus with me began love and poetry."

In Burns's *Commonplace Book*, April, 1783, we find this poem and the following comment: "There is certainly some connection between love and music and poetry; and therefore I have always thought it a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love-composition: —

> 'As toward her cot he jogged along,
> Her name was frequent in his song.'

For my own part I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were in a manner the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances. The subject of the poem was a young girl (Nellie Kirkpatrick) who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed upon her." Then follows some admirable criticism of the poem, stanza by stanza. "The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favorite idea — a sweet, sonsie lass; the last line, however, halts a little."

Burns called this "puerile and silly;" but if we compare it with the earliest work of other lyric poets, we can see how far he surpasses them all. I do not know of any first poem of any author which has in it such promise and potency of future greatness. This is reason sufficient for inserting it in a collection which aims to be representative. For an admirable discussion of Burns's power as a song-writer, see Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*, "Scottish Song and Burns."

In comparing the high light of this poem with the low light of the 'auld clay biggin' in which the poet was nurtured, Mrs. Oliphant says, "The little scene in the harvest-field balances with its sweet daylight, its first love and first song, the Rembrandt interior of the farmhouse kitchen and its copybooks. 'Puirtith cauld,' such as 'wrecks the heart,' and labors without ceasing — but at the same time warm, natural, hopeful life and poetry and love; a prince could not have more."

In 1786 Burns presented copies of some of his early poems to Mrs. Stewart of Stair. The manuscript of this poem omits the fifth stanza, and gives the fourth as follows: —

"But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
Good-humored, frank, and free;
And still the more I view them o'er,
The more they captive me."

He afterwards returned to the original form of 1783.

Although Burns is known chiefly by his verse, his prose is interesting for many reasons; but chiefly for its content — the light which it throws upon his life and habits of poetic composition. What interests us in its form is the fact that it reveals imitation rather than creation. He deliberately set about being a good prose-writer, and failed because of this very consciousness of effort. His verse is characterized by spontaneity and grace; his prose too often by affectation and dress. He says, "I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pondered over them most devoutly." In his Tarbolton days he piqued himself on his ability to write a *billet doux*,

THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

At the time of the previous poem Burns was living at Mount Oliphant; but on the death of the landlord, who had always dealt kindly with the family, they fell into the hands of a factor (agent) who was severe even to heartlessness. In 1787, ten years after the events of this season, Burns wrote, "My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters which used to set us all in tears." The lease terminated in 1777, when they removed to Lochlea in the parish of Tarbolton, on the River Ayr, where they remained seven years. "These seven years," says Gilbert Burns, "brought small literary improvement to Robert;" yet these years gave us some of the songs which have become most certain of immortality. During this time the social instinct in Burns becomes prominent, and is reflected in this poem. The melody of this song floated down from earliest time. Burns from the first laid it down as a rule "'to sowth the tune' over and over, as the readiest way to catch the inspiration, and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scottish poetry."

"It is generally believed in the west of Scotland that Annie Ronald was the inspirer of this charming song. The poet was a frequent visitor at her father's house, and Mr. Ronald liked so much the conversation of his eloquent neighbor that he sat late with him on many occasions." — Cunningham.

Mr. Douglas says, "Many of the Annies of the district have contended for the honor of being the heroine of this poem."

NOW WESTLIN WINDS.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

Burns went to the dancing-school to give his rustic manners "a brush," as he called it. He spent his seventeenth summer at Kirkoswald, on the Carrick coast, studying mensuration. Here he met a lass

by the name of Peggy Thomson, who became the subject of this poem. "Stepping into the garden," says he, "one charming noon, to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel, —

'Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.'

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school." On returning to Lochlea he wrote this poem.

Burns wrote four lyrics in honor of this charmer, of which this is the best. She was alarmed, it is said, when one of the poems appeared in print. She was a woman of much higher position than Burns; but she loved his admiration, and led him on, although she was affianced to another. Burns says, "It cost me some heart-aches to get rid of the affair."

In 1786, when the first edition of his poems was published, he sent a copy to the Kirkoswald Peggy. In it was written: —

"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."

In a note to this poem in Burns's manuscript collection, he says: "Poor Peggy! Her husband is my old acquaintance, and a most worthy fellow."

"Burns was the lyric poet of love, — love in its purest and best form — among a class of unsophisticated people, who have no temptation either to poison its purity by secondary respects, or to let it run riot in fields of unreal and unhealthy imagination." — JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

Robert Louis Stevenson says of this period in Burns's life: "Gallantry was the essence of life among the Ayrshire hills as well as in the court of Versailles; and the days were distinguished from each other by love-letters, meetings, tiffs, reconciliations." "In all this," says Andrew Lang, "Burns is the true representative of every Scot who *is* a Scot, and of his nation." Burns has received generous treatment at the hands of his brother poets in Scotland; and to see him

as he is thus viewed by his countrymen, the student should read Cunningham, Hogg, Shairp, Blackie, Carlyle, Wilson, Minto, Veitch, Stevenson, and Lang.

MY NANNIE O.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

LOVE-MAKING now becomes still more a passion. "I felt," he says, "as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of the courts of Europe.

When twenty-one years of age, Burns founded the famous Tarbolton Bachelors' Club. The following is from the preamble, which Burns himself wrote: —

"Of birth or blood we do not boast,
Nor gentry does our club afford;
But ploughmen and mechanics we
In nature's simple dress record.

"As the great end of human society is to become wiser and better, this ought, therefore, to be the principal view of every man in every station in life. But as experience has taught us that such studies as inform the head and mend the heart, when long continued, are apt to exhaust the faculties of the mind, it has been found proper to relieve and unbend the mind by some employment or other that may be agreeable enough to keep its powers in exercise, but at the same time not so serious as to exhaust them. . . .

"Impressed with these considerations, we, the following lads in the parish of Tarbolton, resolved for our mutual entertainment to unite ourselves into a club or society under such rules and regulations that, while we should forget our cares and labors, we might not transgress the bounds of innocence and decorum." The first meeting was on Halloween, the 11th of November, 1780, when Burns was chosen president, and the question for debate was a very practical one, — of what were the most desirable qualities in a wife.

Burns also formulated the rules for the government of the society;

they are, as Professor Blackie says, "judicious and sensible, and contain nothing in the main but what the necessities of profitable discussion and the laws of good order plainly suggest." Rule No. 10 is strikingly indicative of the poet's character. It is as follows: —

"Every man proper for a member of this society must have a frank, honest, open heart, above anything dirty or mean; and must be a professed lover of one or more of the female sex. In short, the proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteelly to make both ends meet, is just as happy as this world can make him."

"The Nannie who lived among the mosses near the Lugar was a farmer's daughter, of Tarbolton parish, Agnes Fleming by name, and charmed unconsciously the sweet lay, 'My Nannie O,' from the elegance of her person and the melody of her voice. She died unmarried and well advanced in life. When questioned about the poet's attachment, she said, 'Aye, atweel he made a great wark about me.'" — CUNNINGHAM.

Allan Ramsay, to whose inspiration Burns owed so much, has a song by the same name, and composed to the same air; but it is distinctly inferior to that of our poet. Compare the following stanza of Ramsay's poem with the fifth of Burns's: —

> "How joyfully my spirits rise,
> When dancing, she moves finely O;
> I guess what heaven is by her eyes,
> Which sparkle so divinely O."

What Professor Blackie says of the poems of this period is strikingly true of this one as contrasted with Ramsay's. "In them we discover all the genuine warmth, unaffected simplicity, and easy grace of truthful nature which will often be sought for in vain in the lyric productions of the most accomplished poets of the most refined ages of all countries; nothing conventional, nothing artificial, nothing affected or overstrained."

"Never was a more manly song." — MRS. OLIPHANT.

Burns says, "Whether 'My Nannie O' will stand the test I will

not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, genuine from the heart."

These were the poems which kindled the lyric fire in Wordsworth, and which caused him to pay that touchingly sympathetic tribute to Burns in 1803, when there was so much severity and injustice meted out in the name of criticism: —

"Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius 'glinted' forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved; for he was gone,
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth."

It was fitting that the first-fruits of Wordsworth's earliest visit to Scotland should be dedicated to the memory of the ploughman poet. Written in Burns's favorite metre, they are the finest tribute ever paid to that "darling of the Muses."

v. Cf. Wordsworth's *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland.*

In 1792 Burns wrote to Thomson: —

"Let me remark to you that in the sentiment and style of our Scotch airs there is a pastoral simplicity, a something we may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay, peculiarly, apposite."

MARY MORISON.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THIS tender and delicate song reveals the nature of Burns's trysts with the lasses of Tarbolton in a free and healthful manner, and with nothing of coarseness or rudeness. Burns says of these meetings: "To the sons and daughters of labor and poverty they are matters of

the most serious nature; to them, the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments." Writing to Mr. Thomson in 1793, he says of this poem: "It is one of my juvenile works. I do not think it very remarkable either for its merits or its demerits."

Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "The same passion ran through all he said and did. No one felt more keenly than Burns that tingling of the heart which at its highest produces poetry of word and deed."

Mr. Douglas says of the variety of Burns's objects of interest: "One might as well try to trace all the originals of Horace's or Herrick's fancy as that of Burns, for when he became famous even married women contended to have sat to him for their portraits. The passion is more lively than intense, their charm is in the field breeze that blows through them as freshly as in the old days of Chaucer."

"Song drooped and fell, and one 'neath northern skies,
With southern heart, who tilled his father's field,
Found Poesy a-dying, bade her rise
And touch quick Nature's hem, and go forth healed.

On life's broad plain the ploughman's conquering share
Upturned the fallow lands of truth anew,
And o'er the formal garden's trim parterre
The peasant's team a ruthless furrow drew."

WILLIAM WATSON.

It was by such lyrics as these that Burns purified the atmosphere of Scottish song. Before his time the melodies had been filled with "moral plague" against which, says Thomas Aird, "all the preachers in the land could not avail. The only way was to put something better in its stead. This inestimable something better Burns gave us." This should be borne in mind by all who may hear the moralizings of those would-be critics who sip the cup of scandal, and exultingly pass it around the board, crying, "What good critics are we!" Mr. Stopford Brooke, in his introduction to the *Golden Book of Coleridge*, shows his indignation at such treatment of poets. "How wicked it has been! It has turned men's eyes away from the permanent and noble in them to the transcient and the commonplace. The reverence

due to their work has been lowered, and this is an injury to mankind. It is the worst of immoralities." Mrs. Oliphant says, "The medicine of this fresh and simple nature was what sick poetry wanted to restore the noblest of the arts. No woman of that day, in any language (unless it were the Kätchens and Friederikas, by whom Goethe was educating himself to all the varieties of emotion in the depths of Germany), had such exquisite homage offered to her as had Mary Morison, whoever she may have been; and it is a curious thing to realize that, in all the English-speaking races, there was not one but this Ayrshire rustic to whom that mystery of pure and perfect feeling was revealed."

For a similar feeling from a singer who has often been called unimpassioned, see Wordsworth's *Lucy Poems*.

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways."

"Three years she grew in sun and shower."

"Strange fits of passion have I known."

"I travelled among unknown men."

The Lucy of these poems is as unknown as the Mary of those of Burns.

"But who his human heart has laid
To Nature's bosom nearer?
Who sweetened toil like him, or paid
To love a tribute dearer?"

WHITTIER.

"As he was thus the poet of the poor, anxious, cheerful, working humanity, so he had the language of low life. He grew up in a rural district, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame." — EMERSON.

WINTER, A DIRGE.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

WILLIAM BURNS was now in failing health. The brothers grew flax on their farm; and Robert went to Irvine (1781) to learn to dress it, and thereby increase their profits. Irvine was frequented by a rough, adventurous class. Burns was depressed and melancholy. He

sought relaxation among sailors, and their friendship did much mischief. He was robbed by his partner in trade, his shop was burned, and he returned seven times more disheartened than before.

This poem is the natural outcome of these experiences. Alluding to the subject of the poem, he says, "Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of winter, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortune, I composed the following."

Professor Veitch says, "We ought to be thankful to the poet for his precious susceptibilities, for thus the world came to know that there was a new link of communion between the pure soul of man and the universe of God."

A PRAYER.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

THIS poem belongs to the same period as the former, and carries a similar revelation. It was most unfortunate that such experiences came at a time when Burns was on the threshold of a great future. Hawthorne says in the *Marble Faun*, "As these busts in the block of marble, so does our individual fate exist in the limestone of time. We fancy that we carve it out; but its ultimate shape is prior to all our action."

We do not know the human heart sufficiently well to pronounce judgment, but we can pity and be sympathetic.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

BROWNING.

"Let those who never erred forget
His worth, in vain bewailings;
Sweet Soul of Song! I own my debt
Uncancelled by his failings."

WHITTIER.

Alluding to his broken spirit at this time, Burns says, "In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow-trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed this prayer."

John Stuart Blackie says of this poem, "The man who could feel and write thus was not far from the best piety of the Psalms of David."

"It is the religious element in Burns that fuses and kindles all the rest, that makes him the voice of the race at *its* best when he is at *his* best." — E. CHARLTON BLACK.

"With shattering ire and withering mirth
He smote each worthless claim to worth,
The barren fig-tree cumbering earth
He would not spare.
Through ancient lies of proudest birth
He drove his share."

WILLIAM WATSON.

Cf. Cowper, *Olney Hymns*: —

"God moves in a mysterious way."

Cf. Chatterton: —

"O God, whose thunder shakes the sky."

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THIS is one of Burns's most characteristic poems, one in which his peculiar inimitable moral humor first displayed itself.

Gilbert gives us the circumstances attending the inception of the poem: "Robert had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbor, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us at midday, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Poor Mailie was set to rights; and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me *Death and Dying Words.*"

Carlyle says, "The humor of this piece is as fine as that of Sterne, yet altogether different, — original, peculiar, the humor of Burns."

It is worthy of note that the idea of brotherhood with animal nature, which now is universal, began at the close of the last century with the two contemporaries, Cowper and Burns, and was carried to its finest illustration in Cowper's *Task*, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, and Wordsworth's *Hart Leap Well.*

L. 6. "Hughoc was an odd, glowran, gapin' callan" (R. B.).

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THE date of this poem is not known; but because of its relation to the preceding I've placed it here, notwithstanding it bears evidence of the poet's later freedom and force.

These poems were probably suggested to Burns by Skinner's *Ewie wi' the crookit horn.*

Mrs. Oliphant says, "Every influence around him entered into his soul. Its door stood open night and day to receive everything that

was weak and wanted succor, to admit everything that was lovely and noble. In all the world there was not a created thing shut out from his sympathy. He is like a god in his tender thoughtfulness, his yearning for the welfare of all."

Dr. Currie says that in preparing the poem for the press Burns substituted the present sixth stanza for the following: —

"She was nae gat o' runted rams,
Wi' woo like goats, and legs like trams;
She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs,
A famous breed."

Fairlie was the first place in Ayrshire where the poet's father in early manhood obtained employment as a farmer or gardener.

1784.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

THIS poem appears in Burns's *Commonplace Book* under August, 1784, and was first printed in the Edinburgh Edition. "It was not printed in the Kilmarnock Edition," says Cunningham, "from a fear that the daring compliment to woman in the last verse might give offence. The rich incense of this strain was not offered at the shrine of high-born beauty by a poet pruned and starched and perfumed to fit him for the service, but by a homely, hearty, country hind, fresh from the plough, inspired only by the charms of the bonnie lasses around him."

The last stanza was probably written while Burns was in Edinburgh, as it does not appear in the manuscript.

In his *Commonplace Book* Burns wrote, "Young men are divided into grave and gay. The grave are those who are goaded on by the love of money, and whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The gay are the jovial lads whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed by all the deli-

cacies of feeling. This fragment will enable any one to determine which of these classes I belong to."

Burns's son Robert used to repeat a stanza added by himself, which is of interest as related to the last stanza of the poem: —

"Frae man's ain side the form was made
That a' God's wark surpasses O;
Man only loes his ain heart's bluid
Wha dearly loes the lasses O."

EPISTLE TO DAVIE.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

Burns's father died in February, 1784; but before this sad event happened, Gilbert and Robert had leased of Gavin Hamilton a small farm at Mossgiel in the parish of Mauchline. In evidence of Robert's determination to do his best, we have the following words of his: "I read farming books, I calculate crops, I attend markets; and, in short, in spite of the Devil, the world, and the flesh, I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops."

From the autumn of 1784 to the autumn of 1786, when he went to Edinburgh, "the fountains of poetry were unsealed within, and flowed forth in a continuous stream." It was during these years at Mossgiel that his genius reached its height, and that his frailties became most marked.

When we consider the nature of Burns, and his environment, it seems but natural that love-poetry should be his earliest work, that it should be distinguished for depth of passion and lyric grace, and that when his life became more complex by reason of sad experience, the storm and stress should change not only the subject of his work, but the form and spirit as well. Variety is now the characteristic where before there had been almost monotony; and we have satirical poems, epistles, and poems descriptive of the habits of all animate life.

In the face of this sadness and seriousness of life, Burns began to take the measure of his own nature, and to find solace in the compan-

ionship of those who had sympathy with him; hence the epistles which are so full of revelations of his real life, — biographical in their richness and completeness.

The best known of his friends was David Sillar, the son of a Tarbolton farmer. He was schoolmaster at Irvine, and something of a poet, having published a volume of verse. One stanza of a poem addressed to Burns is as follows: —

"Great numbers on this earthly ba'
As soon as death gies them a ca'
Permitted are to slide awa'
And straight forgot.
Forbid that this should ever fa'
To be your lot."

He was an associate of Burns in the Bachelors' Club. Gilbert says, "It was, I think, in the summer of 1784, when, in the interval of hard labor, Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of the epistle. I was much pleased with it, and was of the opinion that it would bear being printed."

Chambers's description of the farmhouse at Mossgiel is interesting as related to the work done there. "The house is very small, consisting of only two rooms, a but and a ben, as they are called in Scotland. Over these, reached by a trap stair, is a small garret, in which Robert and his brother used to sleep. Thither, when he returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire, and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields. His favorite time for composition was at the plough." Mrs. Begg, the poet's sister, after the publication of the poems, used to say that when the boys had gone to the fields she would climb to the little room and search the table-drawer for the verses.

The Scotch people are worshippers of Burns; and a pilgrimage to the *Land of Burns* will be made interesting and instructive by the frequent memorials, and the zeal with which his countrymen vie with each other in doing justice to their darling poet. Monuments are erected at Ayr, Kilmarnock, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Dundee, Glasgow, and Aberdeen.

Naturally enough the largest number of memorials are at Ayr: the house in which he was born, the Tam o' Shanter Inn, and the monument, are familiar to most readers of the poet. In 1891 a statue was erected, and in 1895 the last of the four panels was put in place. This panel was the gift of the Scotch in America, and represented contributors from twelve States. It was unveiled by Mr. Wallace Bruce, and represents the parting of Burns and Highland Mary. The other three panels represent Tam o' Shanter at the Auld Brig o' Doon, The Cotter's Saturday Night, and the Jolly Beggars. Dr. Burrell of New York made the presentation speech, in which he claimed that Burns was an American in love of political and religious liberty, and in his devotion to the poor and the oppressed.

From Sidney Colvin's *Letters of Keats*, we learn that Keats visited Ayrshire in 1818. He wrote two sonnets there, one at the tomb of Burns, and the other at the birthplace. From the latter I quote: —

"My pulse is warm with thine own barley-bree,
My head is light with pledging a great soul,
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
Yet can I ope the window-sash to find
The meadow thou hast trampèd o'er and o'er."

ii. 11. From Allan Ramsay.

viii. 9. *Meg:* Margaret Orr. Davie did not win her.

viii. 10. *Jean:* Jean Armour. Burns first met this girl — the daughter of a Mauchline master-mason — at a ball with which the Mauchline Races closed in the year 1784. In the same set danced Jean and the Ayrshire lad, when a dog came upon the floor and followed them about. This produced some merriment, which caused Burns to say that he wished any of the lassies loved him as well as his dog did. Soon after this, while Jean was bleaching clothes on the village green, Burns and his dog came along, and the latter ran across the clothes; whereupon Jean asked the master if he had found any one to love him as much as his dog did. "This, of course," says Professor Blackie, "was an oblique female way of saying that, in point

of affection to such a master, she could vie with the dog. And at that moment the spark was kindled we have seen grow to a flame in the Epistle to Davie." The courtship continued through 1785, and early in 1786 they were clandestinely married. *Cf. Farewell to the Banks of Ayr.*

Charles Kingsley, in comparing the faces of the four men whom he considered the most significant of modern times, — Shakespeare, Raffael, Goethe, and Burns, — wrote, "We question whether Burns be not, after all, if not the noblest, still the most lovable, the most like that which we should wish that of a teacher of men to be. Burns's face must have been a face like that of Joseph of old, of whom the rabbies relate that he was mobbed by the Egyptian ladies whenever he walked the streets. The magic of that countenance, making Burns at once tempter and tempted, may explain many a sad story."

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE.

(*Sillar's Poems*, 1789.)

THE world has assented to the judgment of Gilbert in regard to the previous poem, — "that it would bear printing;" but in regard to this one it has had less satisfaction because of the somewhat carelessly free spirit manifested in parts of it. The two poems are good illustrations of the varying moods common to Burns.

ii. 1. One manuscript of the previous poem is headed, "An Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet, Lover, Ploughman, and Fiddler."

iv. 4. Burns was a member of the fraternity of Masons.

After the issue of Burns's first edition, Davie published a volume, and put this poem in as an introduction.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THERE seems to be some uncertainty in regard to the date of this and the two previous poems. Some editors put them in 1785, but the authority of Gilbert Burns ought to be conclusive in the matter. He says, "It was, I think, in the winter of 1784, as we were going

with cart for coals to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot) that Robert first repeated to me the *Address to the Deil.*"

In this poem we see the influence of "Jenny Wilson." "In my infant days," says Burns, "I owed much to an old woman who visited in the family remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poesy, but had so strange an effect upon my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a lookout in suspicious places." This is indeed a tribute to one of those unconscious elements in education which we in these days of methods and examinations may do well to consider. Wordsworth has said: —

> "Our childhood sits,
> Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
> That hath more power than all the elements.
> Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, over ours,
> And they *must have* their food."

"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 Deil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy." — CARLYLE.

Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson says, "His humor comes from him in a stream so deep and easy that I will venture to call him the best of humorous poets. He turns about in the midst to utter a noble sentiment, or a trenchant remark on human life, and the style changes and rises to the occasion."

In 1793 Burns wrote to Miss B—— of York, "As I am a sturdy believer in the powers of darkness, I take these to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the Deil. It is well known that he has some kind of shorthand way of taking down our thoughts."

1785.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

(*Stewart and Meikle's Tracts*, 1799.)

THIS was the *annus mirabiles* in the life and work of Burns. The ease with which he threw off immortal poems would seem to confirm the opinion that he was a child of nature merely, and that he had not schooled himself by severe artistic discipline; yet we know that he studied his models as carefully as did Dryden or Pope. Almost every one of his poems had its precedent, both in form and metre, in Ramsay, Fergusson, or the old ballads. "It is an excellent method in a poet," he says in one of his letters, "and what I believe every poet does, to place some favorite classic author, in his walks of study and composition, before him as a model." And again he writes, "I have no doubt but the knack, the aptitude to learn the muse's trade, is a gift bestowed by him 'who forms the secret bias of the soul;' but I as surely believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labor, attention, and pains." This is a good illustration of what Ruskin says about art and the artist, — that every great work of art is produced without effort, and yet infinite labor and pains must go into the acquiring the *habit*, the *disposition*, the *delight*, of which art is the expression.

Professor Minto says, "The old conception of the Ayrshire ploughman-poet undoubtedly was that his poetry had no historical connection; that it stands apart as a unique phenomenon, entirely unconnected with the main stream of English poetry; that the peasant-poet owed everything to nature, and nothing to books; that he was a high-priest of poetry, without literary father or mother. . . . The theory does injustice to Burns as an artist, and is at variance with the plain facts of his life." — *Literature of the Georgian Era*, p. 343.

Burns's art is "of the people, by the people, and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user."

The Scottish people have always been noted for their disposition to see clearly and feel deeply on questions of Church and State. Theological controversy has played a prominent and strikingly significant

part in their history. Burns would not have been a true son of Scotia had he not reflected both of these characteristics. In the struggle which arrayed New Lights against Old Lights, Liberals in matters of religion against Conservatives, he was to be found in the thick of the combat, wielding the broad-sword of humor and satire with startling effects. The Old Lights, in refusing to countenance anything like gayety, and by neglecting to discriminate between simple, innocent recreation and sin, had invited the contempt of all right-minded people.

It has often been insinuated, if not openly asserted, that Burns was not a religious man; but the sympathetic reader of his poetry can find no ground for such implication, for he sees that it is charged with the *spirit* of our common religious nature. Professor Blackie rightly says, "Burns was not only a Scotsman breathing the religious atmosphere of the west, and brought up with pious care in a religious family, but he was personally a religious man to a degree which the cursory reader of his works would never suspect." "No poet since the Psalmist of Israel," says Andrew Lang, "ever gave the world more assurance of a man. Burns was —

> 'Dowered with the hate of hate,
> The love of love, the scorn of scorn.'

He had said, —

> 'My name is Fun, your crony dear,
> The nearest friend ye hae;
> And this is Superstition here,
> And that's Hypocrisy.'"

Burns's friends, Aiken and Hamilton, had both incurred the censure of the Old Lights, the latter because he had allowed his servant to do some simple necessary work on Sunday, and for the offence was denied the right of baptism for his child. He appealed to the Presbytery of Ayr, and was opposed by a priest, Father Auld, and an elder by the name of William Fisher. Hamilton had Robert Aiken as counsel, and he won the cause. It was after this defeat that the muse heard Holy Willie at his devotions. Burns could not stand by and see men who had befriended him in time of need treated as

culprits by such hypocrites as this Fisher, who strained at gnats and swallowed camels; he misapplied the alms money, and death came to him in a ditch, the result of a drinking bout. Allan Cunningham says, "It is related by John Richmond of Mauchline, that when he was a clerk in Gavin Hamilton's office, Burns came in one morning, and said, 'I have just been making a poem; and if you will write it, John, I'll repeat it.' He accordingly repeated *Holy Willie's Prayer*. Hamilton came in, read it, and ran laughing with it to Robert Aiken; and he was delighted with it."

This poem fell like a bombshell in the camp of the Old Lights. Burns says, "It alarmed the Kirk Session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers." The battle was continued at intervals, until Burns had sent volley after volley of the hot shot of brilliant and scathing satire against this decayed theological fortress.

Professor Blackie thinks that these productions may have done harm to Burns, by estranging from him some truly reverent people, but that they did much good to the mass of his countrymen, because they were the means of reforming many abuses.

By such attacks upon the ecclesiastical stronghold as are revealed in this and the two following poems, Burns became the admiration of some and the terror of others. Divines feared to preach before such an auditor.

The Ettrick Shepherd says, "As a result of these poems, it was felt by all that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet." "Who can praise them too highly," says Andrew Lang, "who admire in them too much the humor, the scorn, the wisdom, the unsurpassed energy and courage?"

"We cannot but rejoice," says Stopford Brooke, "at the way in which he flayed alive William Fisher, 'The Holy Willie' of the poem; his life was as immoral as his death was vile."

If Burns could not always distinguish between evil and the doer of evil, he surely intended to hate only the hateful act and the motive that made it thus.

Charles Kingsley says, "Consider what contradiction between faith

and practice must have met the eyes of the man before he could write with the same pen — and one as honestly as the other — *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *Holy Willie's Prayer*. In these poems of his is to be found a truer history than any anecdote can supply of the things which happened to himself, and of the most notable things that went on in Scotland between 1759 and 1796."

Burns's love of God, of man, and nature, of life in all its simple and rich manifestation, his hatred of all pretence, all deceit, all moral sanctimony, — these are the things which the world will never cease to praise.

"Not Latimer, not Luther, struck more telling blows against false theology than did the brave singer. The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, the French Rights of Man, are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns." — EMERSON.

Mr. Douglas says, "These poems comprise a sheaf which some of the admirers of the poet's softer moods would fain pluck out, and cast like tares into the oven. They fail to see that, for good or ill, they represent as essential a phase of his genius as the lighter characters of *Canterbury Tales* do that of Chaucer. Burns's religious satires are an inalienable part of his work."

"*Holy Willie's Prayer* is a satirical crucifixion, — slow, lingering, inexorable. He hated Hypocrisy, he tore her holy robe; and for the outrage Hypocrisy did not forgive him while he lived, nor has it yet learned to forgive him." — ALEXANDER SMITH.

"*Holy Willie's Prayer* is appalling reading; but the opening stanzas, the most terrible of all, are neither more nor less than a fearless and unshrinking statement of the doctrine of salvation as it was understood by the party satirized." — WALKER.

"The Scotland of Burns was as Puritan in principle as the ideal Israel of the Prophets, and as lax in practice as the ideal Florence of Bocaccio." — LANG.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

In March, 1784, Burns wrote to Mr. Riddel, "I have often noticed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him, though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be with strict justice called *wicked*. Let any one, of the strictest character for regularity of conduct amongst us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but from want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped because he was out of the line of such temptation; and how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know it all. I say, any man who can thus think will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him with a brother's eye."

This is, indeed, common sense, which, after all, is the basis of ethics. It is the key-note in the modern poets, — Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning.

"This is pre-eminently one of those poems whose lines become 'mottoes of the heart.'" — W. C. Douglas.

Professor Shairp says, "Who on the text, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,' ever preached such a sermon as Burns in his *Address to the Unco Guid*"?

In *Rob the Ranter* he had stated his ethical creed: —

"The heart aye's the part aye
That keeps us richt or wrang."

Alluding to his father's teaching, he says: —

"He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing, O,
For without an honest, manly heart
No man was worth regarding, O."

vii., viii. "Nothing can be better," says Stopford Brooke, "than his *Address to the Unco Guid, or The Rigidly Righteous;* these lines are steeped in the spirit of Christianity."

Charles Kingsley, in speaking of Burns's honesty and frankness about sacred things, says, "It has been with the workingmen who read him a passport for the rest of his writings; it has allured them to listen to him when he spoke of high and holy things, while they would have turned with a distrustful sneer from the sermon of the sleek and comfortable minister."

"Burns had a passionate faith in God and man. He sinned, but he believed. He was not a good man, but he was a very real one. Like David, though a sinner, he was a preacher, and not merely a literary artist." — E. CHARLTON BLACK.

Lowell says that, better than to write what will reach only the few, it is —

> "To write some earnest verse or line,
> Which, seeking not the praise of art,
> Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine
> In the untutored heart."

vii. 5. To this verse Robert Louis Stevenson adds: —

"One? Alas! I fear every man and woman of us is 'greatly dark' to all their neighbors, from the day of birth until death removes them, in their greatest virtues as well as in their saddest faults; and we, who have been trying to read the character of Burns, may take home the lesson, and be gentle in our thoughts."

In a letter to Mr. Cunningham in 1792 Burns wrote, "Will you or can you tell me why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart?"

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

BURNS everywhere reveals his indebtedness to his early teachers; and in this poem it is to his mother, whom he is said to have resembled in "bright eyes and intelligent looks," in ease and grace of manner.

She was wont to interest her children by singing to them old ballads, and by telling them old tales of which her memory was full. The one which Burns listened to with the most intense feeling was *The Life and Age of Man*, which began with: —

"Upon the sixteen hundred year
Of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, who bought us dear,
As writings testifie,
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah! man was made to mourn."

That Burns in his twenty-sixth year returned to this old tune, and enforced a moral from a bit of his own experience, is another striking tribute to the unconscious forces in his education.

The incident out of which the poem grew was the following, given in *The Land of Burns*: —

"Near the old bridge of Barskimming Mill lived a decrepit old man named Kemp. He had a trim, sonsie daughter Kate, who had attracted this 'Laureate of Love.' One evening he came from Mauchline to see her, and found the old man mourning because his cow was lost. Kate had gone in search of the stray; so Burns started after Kate, and on his way met a young man who had come upon the same errand, — to see Kate. Burns said to him, 'Baith she and the cow's lost, and the auld man is perfectly wild at the want o' them.' They both then joined in the search; and Burns's companion noticed that he was very sober for a time, when suddenly he turned and walked rapidly toward Mauchline. The next time they met, Burns said, 'I owe you an apology for my silence during our walk, and for leaving you so abruptly.' — 'Oh,' said he, 'Robin, there is no occasion, for I supposed some subject had occurred to you, and that you were thinking, and perhaps composing something on it.' — 'You were right, Miller,' said the poet; 'and I will now read you what was chiefly the work of that evening.' And he read *Man was Made to Mourn*. What an admirable illustration of literature as the child of life! Burns began his *Commonplace Book* (1783) with this comment upon

the relation of his poetry to his life: "As I am but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at the plough-tail, my performances must be strongly tinctured with my unpolished, rustic way of life; but it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature, to see how a ploughman thinks and feels under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the modes and manners of life, operate pretty much alike on all the species."

"Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen.
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives."

WORDSWORTH.

"For 'mid an age of dust and dearth,
Once more had bloomed immortal worth.
There in the strong splenetic North,
The spring began.
A mighty mother had brought forth
A mighty man."

W. WATSON.

"To the wretched, out of the Bible there is no such solace as the poetry of Burns." — ALEXANDER SMITH.

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THE occasion of this song was simple and natural. It was the custom of the peasantry of Scotland to gather for social festivity at each other's houses. The women carried their rock or distaff, and combined work with their gossip. Gilbert Burns says, "It was at one of these rockings, at our house, when they had twelve or fifteen young people with their rocks, that Lapraik's song beginning, 'When I upon thy bosom lean,' was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first *Epistle to Lapraik*." As in New England the farmer's were wont to gather in the fall

for husking their neighbors' corn or for an apple-paring, so wool was spun for the neighbors in Scotland. Lapraik was a lover of the Muse, who lived at Dalfram, near Muikirk; but, having lost his property, Burns advised him to publish his poems. They were printed by John Wilson, Kilmarnock, 1788. Burns dressed up Lapraik's poem here alluded to, and sent it to Johnson's *Museum*.

"Since the time of Burns," says Stopford Brooke, "our poetry has not only been the poetry of man and of nature, but also of passion. And it sprang clean and clear out of the natural soil of a wild heath, not out of a cultivated garden."

Mr. Ernest Rhys, in objecting to the judgments upon Burns given by Carlyle, Shairp, and Arnold (especially to the opinion of Arnold that Burns was not a classic), says, "Not a classic? Then the term can avail us little, I imagine, in lyrical poetry. If passion, fancy, wit, imagination, irresistibly musical, set to the lyric note by a born master of words, cannot procure that praise, then the lyric art must exist for other ends, and the term be confined to the schools."

xiv. 1. *Allan:* Allan Ramsay.

xviii. 1. *Mauchline race:* The race-course at Mauchline was not far from Burns's farm.

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

WILLIAM SIMPSON was a schoolmaster in the village of Ochiltree, and was one of the "rhyming crew," more deserving of praise than many whom Burns encouraged.

iii. 3. *Gilbertfield:* William Hamilton of Gilbertfield.

iv. 1. *O Fergusson: Cf.* Inscription on the tombstone of the Poet Fergusson.

vi. 1. *Auld Coila:* The district of Kyle.

viii. 5. *While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon.* "I am hurt," Burns says in his memoranda, "to see the other towns, rivers, woods, and haughs of Scotland immortalized in song, while my dear native country, the ancient bailleries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, have

never had one Scottish poet of eminence to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes of Ayr, and the heathy, mountainous source and winding sweep of the Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, and Tweed." It is everywhere evident to the careful reader of Burns that he desired, above all things, to make the Lowlands as renowned in song as the Highlands had been.

xviii. 6. *Robert Burns.* Mr. Douglas says that this is the solitary instance of the poet writing his name with one syllable prior to April 14, 1786.

"He keeps himself throughout," says Stopford Brooke, "to Scottish subjects; his scenery is entirely Scottish, his love of liberty concentrates itself round Scottish struggles; his muse is wholly untrammelled. For Scotland's glory and Scotland's beauty

> 'I kittle up my rustic reed,
> It gies me ease.'

And nothing can be better or brighter than the lines in which he expresses this written to W. Simpson."

"In his poetry is to be read clearly the lyric chronicle of all that went to make up the most moving tale of Robert Burns, which is surely to be read, if at all, only with sympathy and tears." — MR. ERNEST RHYS.

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH.

(*Cromek*, 1808.)

IT was fortunate that the New Lights had such a champion as Burns, — a man who would not "give up to party what was meant for mankind." He did not indulge in personal abuse for the love of it, but only when it was the sole means of defending those whom he loved, and who were persecuted for having opinions of their own. His rallying to the support of the Rev. John M'Math is a notable instance of his love of justice. M'Math was a preacher of the New Light, and was often complimented in Burns's poetry. If the spirit here breathed is not that of the Sermon on the Mount, I do not know where to find it.

vi. 1, 2. These lines were repeated in the dedication of the poet's works to Gavin Hamilton.

ix. In a rule of the Bachelors' Club we find the same sentiment: "No haughty, self-conceited person, who looks upon himself as superior to the rest of the club, and especially no mean-spirited, worldly mortal, whose only wish is to heap up money, shall upon any pretence whatever be admitted."

xi. In his *Commonplace Book*, October, 1785, we find this: "Let my pupil as he tenders his own peace, keep up a warm, regular intercourse with the Deity."

A recent letter from Dr. Edward Everett Hale contains the following: "Burns was distinctly and definitely a religious man, and could not have written much which he did, had he not been so."

Mr. Ernest Rhys, in his little volume, *The Lyrical Poems of Burns*, says, "It has been the common responsibility of his biographers to point out how differently he might have lived, how much more wisely he might have ordered his days. More wisely, perhaps, but not so well. There is a diviner economy in these things than we have come to allow."

"He came when poets had forgot
How rich and strange the human lot;
How warm the tints of life; how hot
Are Love and Hate;
And what makes Truth divine, and what
Makes manhood great."

W. Watson.

"I stand where I am set apart to minister to men in sacred things; but I feel as though Robert Burns stood on the same level, and was ordained of God to be a minister of sacred things to the human race." — Henry Ward Beecher.

TO JAMES SMITH.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

James Smith, a merchant in Mauchline, was a man of taste and good sense, as were most of the friends to whom Burns addressed epistles. In 1788 Burns writes to him for one of his best printed shawls, saying that he wishes the first present to his wife should be the work of

one whose friendship he counted on as a "life-rent lease." Smith died a few years before Burns.

In this poem we have the first intimation of Burns's intention to print his works. It was about this time that he took upon himself the name of Poet. "He wrote it in his books, and wrought it in his rhymes," says Cunningham. He changed the spelling of his name from Burness to Burns because he preferred the shorter form.

If we compare this "exhilarating enumeration of the enjoyments of youth and their successive extinction in age," with the poems of Wordsworth written in youth, we find the fundamental difference in the nature of the two poets, — the one intense and fervid, giving his passion the loose rein; the other intense and contemplative, with passion under the power of the will.

Where the one sings —

> "When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,'
> Then farewell vacant, careless roamin';"

the other believing that

> "All that is at all,
> Lasts ever, past recall."

sings —

> "So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die."

Each singer sounds his own note, clear and strong, in the great symphony; and each is necessary for the complete chorus.

Allan Cunningham thinks this epistle is the best of all for "the singular ease of the verse; the moral dignity of one passage, the wit and humor of a second, the elegance of compliment in a third, and the life which animates the whole." He says that stanza xiv. was frequent on the lips of Burns in his dark days.

"How much better to understand a poet like Burns, whose heart was great, too great, indeed, for its narrow environment, — to understand him, than take to condemning him for what his condition and

opportunities being what they were, he could no more help than the fire can refrain from kindling." — ERNEST RHYS.

xxiii. 1. *Dempster.* George Dempster, a distinguished patriot and M.P.

"SEE! THE SMOKING BOWL BEFORE US."

FROM THE JOLLY BEGGARS.

(*Stewart and Meikle's Tracts*, 1799.)

THE occasion of the musical drama, *The Jolly Beggars*, again brings Burns and his friend Smith before us, now in a situation such as Shakespeare would have delighted in, and which we are sure our poet enjoyed to the utmost; for he had, like Shakespeare, a divine rage for humanity in every shape, and liked to have a taste of it in all its forms.

The two cronies were walking by Poosie Nansie's alehouse one evening, when they heard the sound of "meikle fun and jokin." On entering, they found a company of wandering vagrants assembled, —

"Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang."

The company was composed of a maimed soldier and his female companion, a Highland beggar's consort, a wandering ballad-singer, and other such characters. Burns was delighted with the scenes in which each character acted well his part, and a few days afterwards he wrote *The Jolly Beggars*. Scott called it superior to anything of its kind in English poetry for "humorous description and nice discrimination of character;" and this song, the concluding ditty of the "cantata," pleased him very much, as it set the company "above all sublunary terrors of jails and whipping-posts." *The Jolly Beggars* was not printed during Burns's life; it first saw the light in a small volume in 1799, and was in 1801 printed in Glasgow, under the title of *Poems Ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Bard.*"

Matthew Arnold says, "*The Jolly Beggars* has a breadth, truth,

and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's cellar, of Goethe's *Faust*, seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes."

"The manuscript is now in possession of Mr. Gilbert Burns, a nephew of the poet, Knockmaroon Lodge, County Dublin." — W. C. DOUGLAS.

"So powerful, so commanding, is the movement of that beggar's chorus, that methinks it unconsciously echoed in the brain of our greatest living poet when he conceived the *Vision of Sin*. You shall judge for yourself.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool, —
Visions of a perfect state;
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance,
Hob and nob with brother Death.'

Is not the movement the same, though the modern speaks a wilder recklessness?" — LANG.

Mauchline, a typical Scotch village, is a place full of associations of Burns. Here was the scene of many a royal festa of the poet and his cronies. The two places of interest are the church, and near it Poosie Nansie's alehouse, — the one associated with Holy Willie, and the other with the Jolly Beggars. If we stay in this place a few days we shall see what Hawthorne saw a half century ago, "A spectacle of Scotch manners identical with what Burns has given so often, a rollicking crowd gathered at the alehouse, —

'Ae night, at e'en, a merry core
O' randie gangrel bodies
In Poosie Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies;'

or, —

'Roads clad frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie bodie,
In droves that day,'

going to the Holy Fair."

It is but a mile from Mauchline to the farm at Mossgiel; and if we wish to see what obstacles lay in the way of the young farmer, we have only to visit this place. The buildings are not attractive in themselves, but their situation is somewhat picturesque. Not far away is the field where he turned down the daisy, and that other field where the "wee cow'rin tim'rous beastie" was so unceremoniously deprived of house and home. — *Cf.* W. JOLLY, *Burns at Mossgiel.*

HALLOWEEN.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

ONE of the quaintest and most characteristic of the old Scottish festivals is that of Halloween, the last night of the harvest season.

Nothing could reveal so clearly as does this poem the nature of the peasantry of the west of Scotland as it manifests itself on the night so prophetic with charm and spell, so ominous with its forebodings, so fateful in its witchery.

"Of a' the festivals we hear,
Frae Han'sel Munday till New Year,
There's few in Scotland held mair dear,
For mirth I ween,
Or yet can boast o' better cheer,
Than Halloween."

"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 fashion 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 honor the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own." — R. B.

"It 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.

i. 2. *Cassilis Downans:* "Certain little, romantic, rocky green hills, in the neighborhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis." — R. B.

i. 5. *Colean:* "A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favorite haunt of fairies." — R. B.

ii. 4. *Carrick spear:* "The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick." — R. B.

iv. 2. *Stocks:* "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.

v. 5–10. If any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the *custock*, 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.

vi. 2. *Stalks o' corn:* "They go to the barnyard, and pull each, at three different times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *tap-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.

vi. 8. *Fause-House:* "When the corn is in a doubtful state, it being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, etc., 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.

vii. 1. *Nits:* "Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and the 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.

xi. 8. *Blue-clue.* "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 off 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.

xiii. "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.

xiv. *Skelpie-limmer's face:* "A term for female scolding." — R. B.

xvi. "Steal out alone and sow hemp-seed, harrowing it in with anything you can find. Repeat all the while, 'Hemp-seed, I sow thee; and him that is to be my true love come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the person invoked pulling hemp." — R. B.

xx.–xxi. "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.

xxii. "Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *Bean-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.

xxiii. "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 somewhere 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.

xxiv. "The finest descriptive passage within small compass to be found in poesy." — DOUGLAS.

xxvi. "Take three dishes: put clean water in one, foul water in the other, and leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance, in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells with equal certainty no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered." — R. B.

xxvi. 6. *Mar's-year:* In 1715 the Earl of Mar headed an insurrection.

xxvii. 5. "Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the *Halloween Supper*." — R. B.

This poem is modelled after Fergusson's *Leith Races*.

"Our Halloween had passed and repassed, 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." — CARLYLE.

"Here he has sketched the Ayrshire peasantry as they appeared in their homes of merriment, painted with a few vivid strokes a dozen distinct pictures of country lads and lasses, sires and dames." — SHAIRP.

Cf. Collins's *Ode On the Popular Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*.

TO A MOUSE.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

ONE day when Burns was ploughing with a servant by the name of Blane, he turned up this mouse's nest. As the mouse ran away "o'er the stibble," Blane, who held the *pettle*, or plough-cleaning instrument, started after it; but Burns stopped him, saying, "He's done ye no harm." On the evening following this event Burns composed the poem, and woke Blane in the middle of the night to recite it to him.

No poem of Burns's so well reveals his loving and tender nature.

It has never received anything but the highest praise; it is inimitable in its pathos and graceful movement. Ever since Burns and Cowper sang their songs of love for their dependent associates, men have realized more and more that these beings live a life in which they have a share, and have rights which they are bound to respect.

"Every poet who, like Burns, increases that larger tenderness of the heart which not only loves men, but hates to give pain to the lower animals, is, so far at least, religious in his poetry." — STOPFORD BROOKE.

There have been no changes in this poem. "It seems to have issued perfect from the mint of the author's mind when he suddenly stopped the ploughshare's progress on observing the tiny creature's escape across the rig." — W. C. DOUGLAS.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

WE are certain from this poem that Burns had discovered himself long before the critic-folk saw that a new poetic star had risen, — a star that, "touching earth," was destined "to glorify its humble birth with matchless beams." As life in its outward environment became more and more burdensome and the fruits of his husbandry became more and more uncertain, there seemed to be a witness within that the effect of his life would be to make his native land —

"Lov'd at home, rever'd abroad."

It was while brooding upon these things that light came to him by the ingle-nook of the peasant's cot. Ever since that time this little room, with its single window and meagre furnishing, has been a spot sacred to lovers of poetry.

i. 2. *Curlers:* Those playing on the ice a game not unlike our hockey.

x. 1. Quoted from *To James Smith*, p. 51.

x. 5–6. "This couplet was a great favorite of Dr. Chalmers's." — DOUGLAS.

xi. 3. *Bonnie Jean:* When Burns was in trouble with the Armours he changed this to *My Bess I ween*, but afterward restored *Jean*.

xv. 2. *Ancient Borough:* "Ayr, chartered in thirteenth century." — R. B.

xvii. 2. *A race:* "The Wallaces." — R. B.

xviii. 1. *Saviour:* Sir William Wallace.

xviii. 2. *Richardton:* "Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to Sir William Wallace." — R. B.

xviii. 3. *Chief of Sark:* "Wallace, laird of Craigie, who fought under Douglass in the famous battle on the banks of the Sark, 1448." — R. B.

xix. 1. *Pictish shad:* "Coilus, king of the Picts, from whence the name Kyle is said to come." — R. B.

xxi. 2. *Sire and Son:* Dr. Matthew Stewart, the celebrated mathematician, and his son Dugald Stewart, the metaphysician, who had a villa at Catrine on the Ayr.

xxii. 1. *Brydon's brave Ward:* Colonel Fullerton, who travelled under care of Patrick Brydone. Last six stanzas were not in first edition.

DUAN SECOND.

xii. 1. *Coila:* "Burns took this idea from the *Scota* of Alexander Ross, a Mearns poet." — A. C.

Coila. "One of the finest of visions which ever dawned on poet's eye." — J. VEITCH.

xii. 3. The branch of Campbells. — W. C. DOUGLAS.

"A thousand times before now he had been so disquieted, and found no comfort. But the hour had come of self-revelation, and he knew that on earth his name was to live forever." — CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

Painters and sculptors have attempted to represent their ideal of this lovely visitor.

xix. 3–6. "This shows that Burns's poems had been widely circulated in manuscript before publication." — W. C. DOUGLAS.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

It would be a very difficult task to reflect in these notes the abundant and generous praise of this great poem, certainly the best known of all the poet's work. No one has ever alluded to it but in praise both of its spirit and form. It is majestic in its movement and holy in its associations. Of its inception Gilbert says, "Robert had frequently remarked to me 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. The hint of the plan and title of the poem were taken from Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*."

Professor Shairp thinks the religion of the poem was that of the poet's father, and not his own; but with this we cannot agree. We insist that Burns was a genuinely religious man, but that he hated shams in religion so much he often discredited what was sincere in his own feelings. That he went sadly astray we are ready to acknowledge, but not that he was irreligious. Doubtless Christ was not very attractive to him as revealed by the rigid Calvinist preacher of that time.

This tribute to his father is merited by all that we know of his life of love and devotion: —

> "The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
> The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
> The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
> For e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side."

The ancestors of William Burness were men of character, education, and position; they were deeply religious and nobly patriotic, — stanch Jacobites. They were tenant-farmers of George Keith, the Earl Marschal of Scotland. They were natives of Kinkardinshire, or the Mearns, and in 1715 they joined the Mar men in the Jacobite rising.

Dunotta Castle, the fortress of the Keiths, was almost impregnable at the time of the Covenanters; there Scott laid the scene of *Old Mortality*.

In the old churchyard at Glenbervie, not far from Fasque, Glad-

stone's Scotch home, stand two sculptured table-stones (like those to be seen in King's Chapel Burying-ground, Boston), one to James Burness, and the other to William Burness. The poet's father migrated to Ayrshire and rented seven acres of land in Doonside, which he cultivated with his own hands, and upon which he built a modest clay biggin. He married Agnes Brown, "an Ayrshire lass, of humble birth, very sagacious, with bright eyes, of good manners, and easy address."

The Burness stock was Norse mingled with Celtic, a race noted for courage and hardihood. A familiar expression in Scotland is, "I'll do my best, and men o' Mearns can do no more." The Browns were Lowlanders, with Saxon influence. From the union of these four races came the genius of Burns, whose noblest monument is *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

"Some envious power," says John Stuart Blackie, "assigned to Scotsmen a rugged plot of earth on the chilly edge of the world. But strong hearts, subtlety of thought, unbending wills, untiring hands, and a spark of the fire divine which Prometheus brought from heaven to kindle wise invention, — these are the glorious fairies' gifts that the blessed ones, the givers of all good things, have bestowed on Caledonia."

In 1787, when the poet was making a tour of the Highlands, he had for a guide a lad who had read this poem to some purpose; for he said, "I like best *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, although it made me *greet* [weep] when my father had me to read it to my mother." On hearing this, Burns replied, "Well, my callant, I don't wonder at you *greeting* at reading the poem; it made me greet more than once when I was writing it at my father's fireside."

It should be mentioned here that it was this poem that gained for Burns one of his most helpful friends, Mrs. Dunlop. After it had been published, 1786, the edition which contained it came into Mrs. Dunlop's hands through a friend. This poem so affected her that she despatched a messenger to Mossgiel, a distances of fifteen miles, with a letter to Burns, asking him to send her a dozen copies, and also inviting him to her house as soon as it was convenient for him to come. This friendship lasted, and richly blessed the poet, throughout his life. Almost the last thing he did before his death was to write her. Mrs.

Dunlop showed this poem to her housekeeper, who wondered that her mistress cared to entertain one so unknown as was Burns; and the old lady returned it, saying, "Gentlemen and ladies may think muckle of this; but for me, it's naething but what I saw i' my faither's hoose every day, an' I dinna see hoo hae could hae tell't it ony ither way."

"He threw over the poor," says Stopford Brooke, "the light of God. Every one knows the scene in *The Cotter's Saturday Night;* every one has felt how solemn and patriarchal it is."

"A sketch of family life more pure, more true, or more touching, never was made. Hard must that man's heart have been, and opaque his intellect, who, after reading *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, could have looked with disdainful eyes upon any cottage. Scotland was the first object of the revelation — but after Scotland, mankind." — MRS. OLIPHANT.

The humble thatched cottage in which Burns was born, and in which we naturally lay the scene of this poem, still stands, and is the centre of interest to tourists. The birth-room contains interesting relics of the poet. Wilkie, in his famous painting, has reflected the spirit of the scenes in this poem.

The visitor to Ayrshire will not fail to see many such genuinely human and nobly simple home-scenes. To break bread in one of these modest homes; to see the standard of virtue and excellence among the sons of toil; to hear the Bible read, and listen to the singing of the songs of Burns; to join in the rural festivities, — is to get close to the heart of things in which our poet was delighted to live and work. It is the most suggestive commentary upon his work which can be imagined, while at the same time it reveals to one the sources of the richness and sweetness, the depth and strength, of Scottish character.

xvi. 3. Pope's *Windsor Forest.* — R. B.

From Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle* we take the following characteristic verses. Speaking of the bairnies he says: —

> "In rangles round, before the ingle's lowe,
> Frae gudame's mouth auld-warld tales they hear,
> O' warlocks loupin' round the wirrikow;
> O' ghaists that win' in glen and kirkyard drear,
> Whilk touzles a' their tap, and gars them shake wi' fear."

"At the Centenary Celebration to be held in Glasgow July 21 of this year (1896), *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is to be recited in the twelve languages into which it has been translated." — *Glasgow Herald.*

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.

(*Edinburgh Eds.*, 1787–1794.)

"THE hero of this poem," says Burns, "is John Wilson, schoolmaster in Tarbolton. This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is professedly a brother of the sovereign order of the ferule, but by intuition and inspiration he is at once apothecary, surgeon, and physician." He had added to his work of schoolmaster that of apothecary, and advertised that he would prescribe for the poor sick, gratis. At a Masonic meeting, in the fall of 1785, he made a speech, the vocabulary of which was largely from the Latin medical books. It displeased Burns so much that he shouted, "Have done, Dr. Hornbook!" On his way home from the meeting, Burns met a man lying by the roadside, and the idea of Death suggested itself; seating himself on the parapet of the bridge near Willie's Mill, he composed this poem, then fell asleep, and when he woke the sun was rising. "These circumstances," says Gilbert, "he related to me when he repeated the verses to me the next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me." Thus this poem, like *Tam O'Shanter*, was struck off at a single heat. It is said that the publication of this poem in the second edition of the poet's works raised such a laugh at the Doctor that he removed to Glasgow.

iv. 2. *Cumnock hills:* Southeast of Tarbolton.

v. 2. *Willie's mill:* On the road to Mossgiel, occupied by William Muir, a friend of Burns. He was one of the subscribers to the second edition of the poet's works. The place is easily identified at the present time.

viii. 2. *Sawin:* "The time of the poem was seed-time, 1785." —R. B.

xi. 5. "*This while:* An epidemical fever was then raging." — R. B.

xiv. 3. *Buchan :* "Buchan's domestic medicine." — R. B.

xxi. 1. *Johnny Ged :* "The grave-digger." — R. B.

The Masonic lodge to which Burns and Dr. Hornbook belonged possesses many letters from the poet. Surely the man who drove such a pointed quill was to be feared by all the quacks of life or art.

Wordsworth, the most temperate of bards, admired this poem, and said of it, "When Burns wrote his *Death and Doctor Hornbook*, he had rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps much exhilarated by liquor; yet how happily does he lead his reader into the track of sensation! and with what lively humor does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to the test by his deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon: —

> 'But whether she had three or four,
> I cou'd na tell.'"

Douglas says, "Many a time, in his latter days, Hornbook has been heard, over a bowl of punch, to bless the lucky day when the dominie of Tarbolton provoked the castigation of Robert Burns."

"Of his humor, which is merely his love laughing and playing antics in very extravagance of joy, what can be said, except that it is the freshest, most original, most delightful, in the world." — ALEXANDER SMITH.

"There are few, if any, satires in the English language more poetical in character. Humor and satire mingle with vigorous narrative. The keynote is struck in the opening scene where the poet, 'canty' with the 'Clachan yill,' sets his staff to keep him steady, and vainly attempts to count the horns of the moon." — H. WALKER.

A WINTER NIGHT.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

FOR exquisite rightness there is no poem of Burns's which can surpass this. It is not cold, — an artist's etching, — but alive with the warmth of a genuine human being. It is "dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity," says Wordsworth.

Speaking of the tender sympathy which lights up the poem, Carlyle

says, "This is worth a whole volume of homilies on mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy itself. Burns lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being; nothing that has existence can have indifference to him."

"The love that God had for the universe," says Stopford Brooke, "was reflected in the breast of Burns, and so wrought that when he was most full of it, he drew nearest to God. . . . The practical result of much of his poetry in his age was to do similar work to that of Christ."

"Who could have supposed," says Mrs. Oliphant, "that of all places in the world a fellow-feeling so exquisite, so delicate, so tender, was waking under the roof of a clay cottage, and thinking, like heaven itself, of the humblest things, — the sparrows that do not fall to the ground without our Father?"

Cf. Thomson, *Winter*.

> "Ah, little think the gay, licentious, proud,
> Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround;
> They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
> And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
> Ah, little think they, while they dance along,
> How many feel, this very moment, death,
> And see the sad variety of pain."

vii. Coleridge applied the moral of these concluding verses to the Ancient Mariner. *Cf. As You Like It*, Act ii. Scene vii., Songs i. ii.

The earliest mention of this poem is that in one of Burns's letters to Mr. John Ballantyne of Ayr, dated Mossgiel, November, 1786. The exact date of composition cannot be fixed.

Cf. King Lear, Act iii. Scene 2.

THERE WAS A LAD.

(*Cromek*, 1808.)

In this nimble poem we have a scene in the north countrie at the birth of a man child. The gossips read his fate, and thus satisfy the curiosity of the fond parents. In an old copy of the song in Burns's handwriting, the first stanza and chorus are as follows: —

"There was a Birkie born in Kyle,
But what na day or what na style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be so nice with Davie.

Leeze me on thy curly pow,
Bonnie Davie, daintie Davie;
Leeze me on thy curly pow,
Thous'e ay my daintie Davie."

By the insertion of Robin we are sure the poet meant this as a forecast of his fame.

i. 1. *Kyle*: central district of Ayrshire.

1786.

THE year 1786 is an eventful one for Burns in many ways, but chiefly because of the depth of despair into which he was driven by the unfortunate incident with the Armours, and because of the delight which came to him by the publication of his poems. Burns lived a life of sharp contrasts; he was either on the heights or in the depths; his was never a valley life of calmness and happy serenity. Hamlet-like, he was never happy in that he was not over happy. He was the very button on Fortune's cap, or else he was the soles of her shoe; he never lived in the middle of her favors.

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

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

"IN this homely but most kindly humorous poem," says Professor Shairp, "you have the whole toiling life of a ploughman and his horse, done off in two or three touches; and the elements of what may seem a commonplace, but was to Burns a most vivid, experience, are made to live forever. For a piece of good graphic Scotch, see how he describes the sturdy old mare in the plough setting her face to the furzy braes."

In respect of 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." — CARLYLE.

"The *Address* is an autobiography. The master remembers himself along with his mare when she was 'dappl't, sleek and glaizie, a bonnie gray,' and he the pride of a' the parishen. The recital of it has brought tears of pleasure to the eyes and humanized the heart of a Gilmerton carter." — CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

James Hogg, in chapter ii. of his Memoir of Burns, has some admirable remarks upon the peasantry of Scotland and their relation to the poetry of Burns. "When we consider the genius of Burns," says he, "we see it manifestly moulded and colored by his agricultural life. It was thus that nothing seemed worthy to engross his attention but the feelings and the passions of the heart of man." Again, alluding to the fact that some have thought Burns's poems irreligious and immoral, he says, "Now, indeed, if this be the case, it is most unaccountable that such compositions should have become universally popular among a grave, thoughtful, affectionate, and pious peasantry, and that the memory of Burns, faulty and frail as his human character was, should be cherished by them with an enthusiastic fondness and admiration, as if they were all bound to him by ties strong as those of blood itself. It would be a gross and irrational libel on the national character of our people to charge Robert Burns with being an immoral and irreligious poet."

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

(*Kilmarnock*, 1786.)

THIS poem is one of the few in which the poet anticipated the possibilities of the future. It is the musing of one who was neither ignorant nor careless of his faults and follies. He seemed to discern the delight with which those who —

> "Sitting on a Prophet's seat,
> As lords of the Human soul,
> Would scan him from head to feet,
> Were it but for a wart or a mole."

The prayer he here uttered for the sympathy he himself had given to others was very soon answered in full by one poet whom he had taught —

> "How verse may build a princely throne
> On humble truth."

In 1803, when standing by the grave of Burns, Wordsworth wrote: —

"Leaving such unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
. . . . . .
Think rather on those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His cause was true,
When wisdom prospered in his sight,
And virtue grew."

In 1816 Wordsworth raised his voice against the spirit of Burns's early biographer. He says, "Plague, then, upon your remorseless hunters after matter of fact. Granting that all which has been raked up to the prejudice of Burns were literally true, how poor would have been the compensation for the deductions made, by this extrinsic knowledge, from the intrinsic efficacy of his poetry, to please and to instruct! Of poets especially it is true, that, if their works be good, they contain within themselves all that is necessary to their being comprehended and relished. It is probable that Burns would have proved a still greater poet, if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered, but he would have been a poet of a different class; and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessory influences, which contribute greatly to their effects, would have been wanting."

Our language does not afford a more temperate, gracious, and wise bit of criticism on the genius and character of Burns.

"We know his worst sins," says Christopher North, "but we cannot know his sorrows. The war between the spirit and the flesh often raged in his nature, as in that of the best of beings who are made; and no Christian, without humblest self-abasement, will ever read *A Bard's Epitaph*." *Cf.* Wordsworth's *Poet's Epitaph*, Tennyson's *A Poet's Mind*, *The Poet*.

"Burns does not deceive himself," says Stopford Brooke; "for he has one of the noblest qualities a man can possess, — entire sincerity with himself. It never occurred to him to be untrue."

"Here is a sincere and solemn avowal; a public declaration from

his own will; a confession at once devout, poetical, human; a history in the shape of a prophecy." — WORDSWORTH.

"After a hundred years, the well-known lines of *A Bard's Epitaph* present the best and justest view of the significance of Burns's life." — H. WALKER.

Cf. At the Tomb of Burns. William Watson.

THE TWA DOGS.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THE caustic wit of this poem is directed against the laird who so oppressed the Burns family when they were at Mount Oliphant. See note to *The Rigs O' Barley*.

"Robert had a dog," says Gilbert, "which he called Luath, that was a great favorite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said that he would like to confer such immortality as he could bestow on his old friend. Cæsar was merely a creation of the poet's imagination."

"The old controversy, which is ever new, between rich and poor has never been set forth with more humor and power." — SHAIRP.

"He preached a crusade against the selfishness of the rich, but he did not wish the poor to become as the rich. Keep to your own life, he said to them; learn to live it; to live truly and honestly in it; to recognize in it the dignity of man." — STOPFORD BROOKE.

Charles Kingsley says, "Burns sees around him and above him, as well as below him, an average of men and things dishonest, sensual, ungodly, shallow, ridiculous by reason of their own lusts and passions, and he will not apply to the shams of dignity and worth the words which were meant for their realities. After all, he does but say what every one round him was feeling and thinking — but he said it; and hypocritical respectability shrank shrieking from the mirror of her own inner heart."

l. 2. *King Coil:* District of King's Kyle in Ayrshire.

l. 27. *Highland sang:* "Cuchullin's dog, in *Ossian's Fingal.*" — R. B.

"The dogs of Burns are downright dogs, and not, like the horses of Swift, and Hind and Panther of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes." — DR. CURRIE.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

GILBERT says of this poem, as of that *To a Mouse*, "I could easily find the spot where the incident occurred."

The moral of the two poems is the same, and comes from the sadness in which the poet was then plunged. The Armours, who were enraged at his secret marriage with Jean, were making his life miserable, and he was planning to go to the West Indies, when his friend, Gavin Hamilton, intimated that he might easily raise the money for the trip by publishing the poems he had lying in his table-drawer. The subscription-list was started and quickly filled; and the poems were given to the printer, accompanied with a characteristic preface which is reprinted in this volume, p. v.

Mr. Greenshields of Kerse, Lesmahagow, has a manuscript copy of the subscription paper for the first edition of Burns's poems.

It runs as follows: "April 14, 1786. Proposals for Publishing by Subscription *Scottish Poems* by Robert Burns.

"The work to be elegantly printed in one volume octavo, price, stitched, three shillings. As the author has not the most distant mercenary view in publishing, as soon as so many subscribers appear as will defray the necessary expense, the work will be sent to press." Then follow names of sixteen subscribers, who were the means of giving to the world that precious volume. The edition comprised six hundred copies, and it was exhausted in two months.

A fac-simile of this edition was published in 1886 by Wilson, at Kilmarnock.

Mr. Andrew Lang asks, "Was it not as unhappy a thing, sir, for you, as it was fortunate for Letters and for Scotland, that you were born at the meeting of two ages and of two worlds, — precisely in the moment when bookish literature was beginning to reach the people, and when society was first learning to admit the low-born to her minor mysteries?" One may be curious to know what Burns's reply to this would have been. I cannot help thinking that he would have said, "It was not so unhappy a thing, sir, as you imply. Although I had my share of trials, I had, too, my share of pleasures;

and not the least among these pleasures was the love and esteem which my printed poems brought me."

Mossgiel farm is situated on a ridge between the valleys of Ayr and Cessnock, into both of which it looks. The blue sea and the peaks of Arran are in the distance. Across the lovely Ballochmyle are the highlands of Muirkirk, famous in the days of the Covenanters. In another direction —

> " The rising sun o'er Galston Muirs
> Wi' glorious light is glentin."

The house has been much altered since Burns's day; but nature remains the same — and yet not the same, for there is no eye to see what Burns saw.

> " From worlds not quickened by the sun
> A portion of the gift was won;
> An intermingling of Heaven's pomp was spread
> On ground which Scottish shepherds tread!"

As we stand on the cold and rugged soil of the Mossgiel farm, we feel sure that to wrest from it a respectable revenue would require the "unceasing moil of a galley-slave." The scene is pathetic, but it is lighted by gleams of such manly Christian sympathy as are seen in this poem. The field of the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" is renowned in story. Wordsworth was one of the first to sing of it and its surroundings: —

> " 'There,' said the stripling, pointing with much pride,
> Towards a low roof, with green trees half-concealed,
> 'Is Mossgiel farm; and that's the very field
> Where Burns plough'd up the Daisy.' Far and wide
> A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
> Above sea-clouds, the peaks of Arran rose;
> And by that simple notice, the repose
> Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
> Beneath the random field of clod or stone,
> Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
> Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
> Have passed away; less happy than the one
> That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to
> Prove the tender charm of poetry and love."

In the early MS. the title of this poem is *The Gowan*.

"I see amid the fields of Ayr
A Ploughman, who, in foul or fair,
Sings at his task
So clear we know not if it is
The lavrock's song we hear, or his;
Nor care to ask."

LONGFELLOW.

TO A LOUSE.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

"A MAUCHLINE incident of a Mauchline lady is related in this poem, which to many of the softer friends of the bard was anything but welcome. It appeared in the Kilmarnock Edition of his poems, and remonstrance and persuasion were alike tried in vain to keep it out of the Edinburgh Edition." — CUNNINGHAM.

Surely the poem was —

"Wisdom to the wise,
And play to them that list to play."

The last stanza has given the poem immortality.

vi. 5. *Lunardi:* Balloon-shaped. Vincent Lunardi made first balloon ascent in Britain in 1785.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THIS epistle was addressed to Andrew Aiken, son of Robert Aiken, to whom Burns inscribed *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. He rose to a position of honor in the service of his country, being English consul at Riga.

For an admirable handling of the subject of Burns's life and the lessons to be derived from it, see *Theology in the English Poets*, Lecture xvi. — STOPFORD BROOKE.

A DREAM.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

IF Burns had not feared grave and reverend church elders and doctors of divinity, it was not likely that he would quail whenever he felt called upon to deal with royalty.

"This poem is marked," says Blackie, "with the manly independence and gay freedom of a born enemy of all convention. The man who wrote this was stamped by nature for a truth-speaker and a public reprover, in a field where preacher and prophet would either be silent or deliver their message with a tone more than half-ashamed of its audacity."

iv. 7–9. Loss of the American colonies.

vii. 3. *Get:* Child. 9. Allusion to a proposal to reduce navy by sixty-four gunships.

x. 8. *Charlie:* Right Hon. Charles James Fox.

xi. 5. *Him:* Henry V.

xi. 7. *Sir John:* Falstaff.

xii. 1. *Osnaburg:* Duke of York.

xiii. 1. *Breeks:* Prince William Henry, who espoused Miss Jordan, a player.

THE LAMENT.

(*Kilmarnock Ed.*, 1786.)

THE Armours, who were of the Old Light party, were indignant at the secret marriage of their daughter to such a representative of the New Lights; they refused to sanction it, and sent her to Paisley to avoid seeing him. The church, too, interested itself in the matter, and was no doubt glad to get its old offender in judgment. Burns was greatly agitated, and, in his desperation at this turn of things and at the failure of his farming operations, decided to go to the West Indies. It was under these circumstances that this poem was written.

"The lark of Scotia's morning sky!
Whose voice may sing his praises?
With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,
He walked among the daisies,
Till through the cloud of fortune's wrong
He soared to fields of glory;
But left his land her sweetest song,
And earth her saddest story."

HOLMES.

"For wisdom and for warning the events of his life are sufficiently familiar; he that runs may read; let him learn, and let him be better.

But I have no sympathy with that vampire-like spirit which disentombs the faults of the illustrious dead to feed the nauseous appetite of itself or others. While I do not regard genius as repealing the law of virtue, neither do I regard it as beyond the law of mercy.'' — H. GILES.

A PRAYER — O THOU DREAD POWER.

(1786.)

HARDLY had the first edition of his poems been issued before a second was proposed. Dr. Blacklock had written to Mr. Laurie, the minister of Loudoun, by whom he had been presented with a copy of the first edition, and had warmly praised the poems. Other appreciative criticisms followed; and his Edinburgh friends desired that he should visit that city, and superintend the publication of a second edition.

Burns was still depressed, and was undecided what his future would be, when Mr. Laurie invited him to his manse at Loudoun. He remained there several days in a smooth and safe harbor. When he came away he left this poem in the room where he had slept. Gilbert says, "Dr. Laurie had several daughters; one of them played; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brothers, the poet, and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world."

"Grace and beauty were altogether absent from the public religion of Burns's day; but private religion, the piety of the heart, has rarely flourished in greater perfection than among the Scottish peasantry of a hundred years ago. If Burns proved the relentless satirist of systematic Calvinism, he proved also the systematic poet and eulogist of fireside piety.'' — H. WALKER.

FAREWELL TO THE BANKS OF AYR.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

OF this poem Burns says, "My chest was on the road for Greenock, and I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia —

'The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,'

when a letter from Dr. Blacklock opened new prospects to my poetic ambition." This new prospect was a second edition of his poems, and by it he was deterred from the voyage to Jamaica. *Cf. To Dr. Blacklock.*

Professor Walker adds, "I requested Burns to communicate some of his unpublished poems; and he recited his farewell song to the banks of the Ayr, introducing it with a description of the circumstances in which it was composed more striking than the poem itself. He had left Dr. Laurie's family after this visit to the reverend friend's house which he expected to be his last, and on his way had to cross a wide stretch of solitary moor. His mind was strongly affected by parting forever 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 dreary across the sky, and cold, pelting showers at intervals added discomfort of body and cheerlessness of mind." We can hardly conceive the feelings of the poet at the thought of leaving forever his loved Ayr.

> "Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
> For honest men and bonnie lasses,"

is divided by the River Ayr, which is spanned by the Twa Brigs: —

> "Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
> The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face;
> New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
> That he at Lon'on frae ane Adams got."

The clay cottage in which Burns was born is about two miles from the village. It is a very humble house, with only two rooms, and is now kept as a memorial to the poet, and is filled with relics of his life and work, which are now worth many times their weight in gold. In the birth-room, opposite the inglenook, is a recess in the wall — the bed — hidden by curtains. "Here it was," says Hawthorne, "that Providence was pleased to deposit the germ of the richest human life which mankind then had within its circumference."

Kirk Alloway, the Burns Monument, and the Doon are all within easy walk of each other. The kirk is a roofless ruin, and the monuments are fast yielding to the tooth of time, yet they are safe in the domain of imagination. Bonnie Doon is the most poetic spot in all the Burns country; here one does not wonder that imagination simple and sweet should wing itself. There is no lovelier spot — even in the charming Wordsworth land — than this quiet and picturesque Doonside. The monument is a Corinthian-columned structure of much beauty. The most interesting relic here is the two volumes of the Bible which Burns gave to Highland Mary when they plighted troth on the banks of the Nith. From the cupola we get a fine view of the country round, — rivers, woods, and hills, — all of which he loved, and of which he sang. One seems to get very near the heart of Burns in these places, and the impressions become everlasting possessions.

The Burns statue, erected in 1891, is the latest addition to the beauties of Ayr. It is life size. The poet, dressed in simple costume, stands with arms crossed, the right hand closely clenched; he looks toward his birthplace and the banks o' the Doon.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

(*Currie*, 1800.)

It seems that in his despair at the Armour troubles, Burns had sought relief in the friendship of one Mary Campbell, an Ayrshire girl, who was in the employ of Gavin Hamilton. They were at last plighted, and in a somewhat romantic manner. "We met in a sequestered spot on the banks of the Ayr the second Sunday in May, and spent the day in taking farewell, before she should embark for the Highlands to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life."

The lovers stood by the side of the stream, and laved their hands in the water, and holding a Bible between them, they promised to be faithful forever.

Mary presented her lover with a small, plain Bible, while he responded with two volumes. These two volumes are now in the Burns Monument at Alloway, near Ayr. They bear two inscriptions in the hand of the poet, — one from Lev. xix. 12, "Ye shall not swear by my

name falsely, I am the Lord;" and the other from Matt. v. 33, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths."

This episode in the life of Burns has been the subject of much heated discussion. We must remember that he had been rejected by the Armours as unworthy of their daughter. Burns at times blamed Jean, but it is doubtful if she ever intentionally wronged him. The most charitable treatment of this period in the poet's life is to be found in Blackie's *Life of Burns.*

What lends all the more pathos to the period is the fact that when his first edition of poems gained for him name and position, the Armours were ready to lay aside their scruples, and to consent to the marriage which they had declared illegal and void. *Cf.* Note, p. 302. 1788.

After their betrothal Mary returned to the Highlands to prepare for the marriage; and it was during her absence, and when Burns was ready for his departure to the Indies, that this poem and the two following were written.

In sending this to Thomson in 1792, he says, "You must know that all my earlier love-songs were breathings of ardent passion; and though it might have been easy in after times to have given them a polish, yet that polish to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their race."

The first line of this song was taken from an old Irish one beginning, "Will ye go to Dublin, my Molly?"

Charles Kingsley, in speaking of the later Scottish song-writers, says, "They seldom really sing; their proses want the unconscious lilt and flash of their old models; they will hardly go (the true test of song) without music — the true test, we say again, of a song. Who needs music, however fitting and beautiful, to the *Flowers of the Forest,* or to *Auld Lang Syne?*"

PRAYER FOR MARY.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

FAMILIARITY with Burns's life up to this time puts one in an atmosphere of mind and heart to appreciate such a soul-inspiring song as

this. Admit that he was suffering from his own indiscretions, yet this does not make the pangs less worthy of sympathy; and we ought to rejoice that he found rest and comfort in the love of one so simple and so sweet as Mary Campbell.

MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

hnson's Museum, 1788.)

THIS song is coined of the same unalloyed gold as the previous one; and the heroine is Mary Campbell, "the warm-hearted, charming young creature" who had blessed Burns with her generous love. While she was in the Highlands, Burns sent her letters weekly. These somewhat disturbed her family, as gossips had informed them that Burns was a "scoffer at women;" but Mary was loyal, and laughed them to scorn. In one of these letters he sent this poem. The mother learned it by heart, and sang it to her grandchildren, being proud of the song that recorded the charms of her favorite daughter.

LINES ON MEETING WITH LORD DAER.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

AMONG other Edinburgh men of letters who welcomed Burns's poetry was Dugald Stewart, the celebrated Scotch metaphysician. He had a country home at Catrine on the Ayr, not far from Mossgiel. On one occasion he invited Burns to dine with him. It was then that he first met a real lord, — a young nobleman, Lord Daer, — who had been a pupil of Dugald Stewart and was then his guest.

Dugald Stewart writes of the meeting, "Burns's manners were simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. Nothing was more remarkable than the fluency and precision and originality of his language when he spoke in company."

This meeting was Oct. 23, only a few days after the death of Highland Mary. *Cf.* Note to *Mary in Heaven*.

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THE incident which gave rise to these lines is characteristic of our poet. He was walking one evening in the grounds of Ballochmyle House, not far from his farm at Mossgiel, when he met a beautiful lady, Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, the daughter of the owner of the estate. He afterwards wrote her and sent a copy of this poem, saying, "The enclosed song was the work of my return home, and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene."

She took no notice of the letter, and Burns was somewhat disturbed. When Mrs. Dunlop tried to excuse her, he said, "Had a half-wittling lord written the poem, madam, would she have left it unanswered?" Cunningham says that later the lady was proud of the letter, and pointed out to the admirers of Burns the spot where the poet met her, and where she had a rustic grotto made to commemorate the event. She died unmarried in 1843. Mr. Douglas says he has seen the letter and poem which she preserved in a glass case, and that they now hang in the "spence," or back-parlor, of the Mossgiel house.

Hawthorne says, "Henceforth for centuries that maiden has free admittance into the dreamland of beautiful women, and she and all her race are famous."

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

THIS song was a tribute to Maria Whiteford, daughter of Sir John Whiteford. It was written as a farewell to the family residence. It is said that the ancestor of the Whitefords suggested to Scott the character of Sir Arthur Wardour in *The Antiquary*. The seat of Professor Dugald Stewart was at Catrine in Ayrshire. This was a favorite resort of the poet.

SECOND PERIOD. 1787–1796.

1787.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1787.)

BURNS set out for the metropolis on the 27th of November, and his journey was a sort of triumphal progress. The farmers in the vicinity of Covington, Lanarkshire, had agreed to signal his arrival with a white flag hung from a pitchfork on a corn-stack. As it was hoisted, they came running from all directions to see the author of the new volume of poems. They met him at a late dinner, when he increased their admiration for him by his ready wit and gentle humor. He reached Edinburgh on the 28th, and went to live with an old cronie at Baxter's Close, Lawnmarket.

Mrs. Alice Cockburn, the gifted author of *I've Seen the Smiling of Fortune Beguiling*, then very aged, wrote of Burns's arrival, "The town is at present all agog with the Ploughman Poet, who receives adulation with native dignity."

The story of his Edinburgh reception must be read in the biography. It is interesting and instructive, not only as a revelation of the nature and the art of the poet, but as a picture of the life of an aristocratic and cultured metropolis in the presence of simple and unaffected genius.

This chapter in Burns's life introduces us to what may be called the second period of his literary work. It was indeed a critical time for a young man who had never been beyond the limits of Ayrshire; but the native strength and beauty of his simple and graceful manner was everywhere apparent, and enabled him to stand firm in the midst of the whirl of fashionable entertainment, and the convivialities of tavern life. The gentry did themselves credit by honoring such a character, and we must believe that they received a lesson in culture

from this rustic ploughman which was very wholesome indeed. We cannot think that their attitude towards Burns was entirely or mainly selfish, as has sometimes been represented; for the quick-witted youth would have readily detected any "crooking of the pregnant hinges of the knee," and would have launched his shafts at the pretenders. Instead of this, we find him praising the sincerity and heartiness of his welcome. The Caledonian Hunt, a society of nobility and gentry interested in the sports of manly men, subscribed for the second edition of the poems, and Burns very courteously dedicated the edition to them. While he was being *fêted* by wealth and culture, by representatives of the University, by the magnates of the Bench and the Bar, and by the Scottish nobility, he did not forget to pay honor at the shrines of simple artless poesy: he visited Canongate Churchyard, and knelt at the lowly grave of Fergusson; he found the shop of Allan Ramsay and reverently entered.

Dugald Stewart says, "The attentions he received from all ranks and descriptions of persons would have turned any head but his own." Scott, then a lad of fifteen, met him at Professor Fergusson's, and wrote, "As for Burns, I may truly say, '*Virgilium vidi tantum*.' I would have taken the poet, had I not known who he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, — 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 and interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head."

Mr. James T. Fields compares Burns with our own Hawthorne in personal appearance, and in the general impression made by his ease and grace of manner. He says, "I remember to have heard, in the literary circles of Great Britain, that since Burns no author had appeared there with a finer face than Hawthorne's. Old Mrs. Basil Montague told me, many years ago, that she sat next to Burns at dinner when he appeared in society in the first flush of his fame, after the Edinburgh Edition of his poems had been published. She said among other things that, although the company consisted of some of

the best bred men in England, Burns seemed to her the most perfect gentleman among them. She noticed particularly his genuine grace and deferential manner toward women."

This poem is a graceful tribute to the Modern Athens as it was in the winter of 1786 and 1787, — to her beauty and grandeur, her noble history and present prosperity, her strong men and beautiful women.

vii. 5–8. *Ev'n I*, etc. George, tenth Earl Mareschal, commanded cavalry at the battle of Sheriffmuir, and was followed by the Burness, his tenants. It is said that Burns's father fought at Culloden.

Cf. Note to *Cotter's Saturday Night.* For another description of Edinburgh see Scott's *Marmion*, Canto IV., xxx., xxxii.

Alluding to the fact that had Burns been born a generation earlier he would have taken his place with the unnamed Immortals who left great songs to a little clan, Andrew Lang says: —

"A quiet life of song, *fallentis semita vitæ*, was not to be yours. Fate otherwise decreed it. The touch of a lettered society, the strife with the Kirk, discontent with the State, poverty and pride, neglect and success, were needed to make your genius what it was, and to endow the world with *Tam O' Shanter*, *The Jolly Beggars*, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*."

It is no wonder that the Scotsman loves his native land and its beautiful city of Edinburgh, as it reveals the life of the past and the life of the present. Here the race-consciousness is everywhere evident in its originality, its passions, its magnificent variety and continuity. Calton Hill, Castle Crag, and Arthur's Seat stand as sentinels of this grand old city, where the old and new blend in the witchery of romance and in the eloquence of noble sons and fair daughters. The greatest names in her literary history, Burns and Scott, are commemorated in enduring memorials, the one on Calton Hill, the other in Princes Street under the shadow of the old castle. Mr. William Winter has said, "There is no literature in the world so musically, tenderly, and weirdly poetical as the Scottish literature; there is no place on earth where the imaginative instinct of the national mind has resisted, as it has resisted in Scotland, the encroachment of utility upon the domain of romance; and no city could surpass the physical

fact of Edinburgh as a manifestation of broad ideas, unstinted opulence, and grim and rugged grandeur." To see this land is to love it for that which is even more beautiful than any poetry or romance produced there.

For the reader who has never visited Scotland I recommend William Winter's *Gray Days and Gold*, Mrs. Oliphant's *Royal Edinburgh*, and R. H. Stoddard's, *Literary Landmarks of Edinburgh*.

EPIGRAM AT ROSLIN INN.

(*Hogg and Motherwell*, 1835.)

ONE evening when Burns had been entertained till a late hour, he was returning with his friend Nasmyth (the artist, and painter of his well-known portrait), and they wandered about the Pentland Hills until early morn, when they came to the village of Roslyn to breakfast. Mrs. David Wilson kept a little inn, and here they refreshed themselves so delightfully that Burns left this poem written on a wooden platter.

EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT.

GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE.

(*Eliza Scott's Poems*, 1801.)

THE lady to whom these lines are addressed was Mrs. Scott, a painter and poet. She had written some stanzas to the bard in which she expressed her appreciation of his work, and concluded thus: —

"O, gif I ken'd but whar ye baide,
I'd send to you a marled plaid;
Twad haud your shouthers warm and braw,
An' douce at kirk or market-shaw;
Far south as weel as north, my lad,
A' honest Scotsman lo'e the 'maud:'
Right wae that we're sae far frae ither;
Yet proud I am to ca' ye brither.
Your most obed. E. S."

The allusion in the third stanza is to the events related in his first poem —

"O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass."

While on his Border tour in the year following the date of this poem Burns visited Mrs. Scott.

COME BOAT ME O'ER TO CHARLIE.

MANY are the songs in sympathy with the exiled Prince Charles. In the uprising of 1745 many of the women wore the cockade. In one Jacobite song entitled, *The Women Are a' Gane Wud*, the chorus is: —

"The women are a' gane wud
O that he'd bidden awa'!
He's turned their heads, the lad,
And ruin will bring on us a'.
I aye was a peaceable man,
My wife she did doucely behave;
But now do a' that I can,
She's just as wild as the lave."

O'er the Water to Charlie belongs to the same period, and reveals how anxious the Highlanders were to have the Prince come back. In this song by Burns there is the same chorus, and but little that had not been in the old song, while one stanza of that, which he has not retained, is: —

"I ance had sons, and now I have nane —
I bred them toiling sairly;
But I would bear them a' again
And lose them a' for Charlie."

Burns's ancestors of Kinkardineshire fought with the Earl Mareschal in 1715, and his father was out with the Jacobites in 1745, so the poet came legitimately by his Jacobinism.

INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMBSTONE ERECTED BY BURNS TO THE MEMORY OF FERGUSSON.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

In paying homage to his early masters, Burns found no memorial to Fergusson, whose *Farmer's Ingle* suggested to him the idea of *The Cotter's Saturday Night;* and he at once wrote to the managers of the kirkyard of Canongate, asking permission to place a simple stone over the "revered ashes." The request was granted, and the stone was put in place. Under this heading, —

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,
Born Sept. 5, 1751 — *Died October* 16*th*, 1774,"

is to be seen the first stanza of this poem, and on the reverse side is —

"By Special Grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, Who erected this Stone in a Burial Place to remain Forever Sacred to the Memory of Robert Fergusson."

Burns's original letter "To the Honorable Baillies of Canongate, Edinburgh," is given by Cunningham from the records of the managers, the last paragraph of which is as follows: —

"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. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your very humble servant, Robert Burns."

When in time the ground settled, and the stone was found out of place, the Æsculapian Club of Edinburgh, soon after Burns's death, reset the stone with an additional inscription: —

TO THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT BURNS, THE AYRSHIRE BARD,
WHO WAS BORN AT DOONSIDE,
On the 25*th of January*, 1759;
AND DIED AT DUMFRIES,
On the 21*st of July*, 1796.

The last two stanzas of this poem were found in Burns's manuscript book.

"Burns followed and furthered the work of Ramsay and Fergusson

in turning our literature from Continental themes and so-called classical treatment of them to Scottish scenery and music, and the modes of Scottish life." — J. VEITCH.

Alluding to the fact that Fergusson has not had justice done him, "as the lad who handed the poetic impulse to Burns," Robert Louis Stevenson says, "There is a kind of gaping admiration that would fain roll Shakespeare and Bacon into one to have a bigger thing to gape at, and a class of men who cannot edit one author without disparaging all others. Whoever puts Fergusson right with fame, cannot do better than dedicate his labors to the memory of Burns, who will be the best delighted of the dead."

TO A LADY WHO WAS LOOKING UP THE TEXT DURING SERMON.

(*Cromek*, 1808.)

THE new Edinburgh Edition of poems published by Creech appeared on 21st of April, and with the assured success of the enterprise Burns began a series of tours to various sections of his native country. He had as companion for the first tour to the Border, Mr. Robert Ainslie, a young Edinburgh lawyer. They started in May, and on their first Sunday stopped at Duns, where lived the father of Mr. Ainslie. They attended church; and when the sermon was in progress, and the clergyman was arraigning the sinners, Burns noticed Miss Ainslie, the sister of his companion, hunting for the text, and at once wrote these lines on a slip of paper and handed them to her.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

IN June Burns had returned to his old home, Mossgiel, where it is said his mother met him with the salutation, "O Robbie!" Lockhart says, "Burns had left them comparatively unknown, his tenderest feelings torn and wounded by the behavior of the Armours, and so miserably poor that he had to skulk from the sheriff's officers to avoid arrest for a paltry debt. He returned, his poetical fame established,

the whole country ringing with his praise." After this visit he went to the West Highlands. "From Glasgow," says Mrs. Begg, "he sent presents to his mother and three sisters, namely, a quantity of *mode* silk, enough to make a bonnet and a cloak to each, and a gown besides to his mother and youngest sister."

Aug. 25 he set out for the Highlands with William Nicol, master of the Edinburgh High School. When they came to Aberfeldy he wrote this song as he stood by the Falls.

HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

At Blair Athole, Burns met his friend Professor Walker, and was warmly welcomed by the duke and his family. On leaving, Burns wrote these lines of thanks in the form of a petition of the stream for shade-trees. The prayer was soon after answered, and beautiful trees adorned the banks. The "angel band" consisted of two sons and four daughters.

THE LOVELY LASS O' INVERNESS.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1796.)

The tourists passed on to Inverness, and visited the scenes associated with Macbeth. "As the poet passed slowly over the fatal muir of Drumossie (Culloden), where the closing act of the Rebellion, 1745–1746, took place, the *Lament of the Lass o' Inverness* rose in his fancy." The original MS. is in the British Museum.

"To what other man was it ever given so to transfigure the country of his birth and love? Every bud and flower, every hill and dale and river, whisper and repeat his name." — George William Curtis.

"The fire which burns through his poems was not elaborated, spark by spark, from mechanical friction in the closet; it was in the open field, under the cope of heaven, that the poetical Franklin caught his lightnings from the cloud as it passed over him, and he communicated them, too, by a touch with electrical swiftness and effect." — James Montgomery.

CASTLE GORDON.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

FROM Inverness they went to Gordon Castle, where lived the duchess who had welcomed Burns to Edinburgh. Here they were hospitably entertained. Burns wrote this song on his return to Edinburgh.

Burns wrote in his *Journal*, "The duke makes me happier than ever great man did."

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

THE two travellers returned to Edinburgh in September. While in Edinburgh, Burns spent some time at the house of William Cruikshanks of the Edinburgh High School. This poem is addressed to the daughter of his friend. She was fourteen years old at that time, and could play and sing his songs.

These poems, and the incidents which occasioned them, remind one of *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland* by Wordsworth.

Mrs. Cockburn writes, "Do you know Burns? I am to get a very pretty little thing he calls *The Rose-bud*. Maybe I'll send it to you next week."

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

THE heroine of this poem was Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, otherwise known as the Flower of Strathmore. Burns met her on his visit to the Highlands, and was impressed with her beauty and cordial good nature. She was one of a small party to accompany the poet on the banks of the Ern to Glenturit, and she pointed out to him many of the beautiful surroundings.

"I composed these verses," says Burns, "while I stayed at Auchtertyre with Sir William Murray." *Cf.* Wordsworth's *Yarrow Poems*, and Borland's *Yarrow, its Poets and Poetry*.

BANKS OF DEVON.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

THIS poem is in praise of a sister of Gavin Hamilton, who lived at Harvieston on the Devon.

Burns wrote to Miss Chalmers, a cousin of Charlotte the heroine of this poem, after visiting her home, "I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper inclosed; but, though Dr. Blacklock commended it highly, I am not satisfied with it myself. You and Charlotte have given me permanent pleasure which the world cannot give nor take away."

1788.

Of the condition of things in Edinburgh in Burns's time Mr. Alexander Smith says, "The literary society of the time was exotic, like the French lily or the English rose. For a generation and more the Scottish philosophers, historians, and poets had brought their epigram from France as they brought their claret, and their humour from England as they brought their parliamentary intelligence."

Would one think it possible that the presence of the ploughman poet in that metropolis, and the chance publication of his poems there, could change all this?

He had enjoyed and suffered in Edinburgh. The flattery and the feasting, the smiles and the speeches, were rated at their true worth. "I have formed many intimacies and friendships here," he says, "but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles." The truth of these words was now to be tested. He began to think of home and of a settled purpose in life, now that Edinburgh had done her best, — a best which could not satisfy this proud-spirited peasant. He must have a life of love, even though it be in an humble cottage.

In the spring of 1788 Burns left Edinburgh, and in March leased the farm at Ellisland, making "a poet's, not a farmer's, choice." The situation of this farm was beautiful for prospect. Located on the western bank of the Nith about six miles from Dumfries, it faced the

lovely stream and the historic holms and forests of Dalswinton on the east, while on the west were the hills of Dunscore and Corsincon. There was no farmhouse, and he was delayed taking possession until one should be built.

In the meantime he married Jean, although the earlier marriage having been declared null and void he was under no legal obligation to return to her; but Burns was not the base man he had been represented to be, and the action, so greatly to his credit, brought peace of mind and gladness of heart.

"My father put me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a';
But I hae ane will take my part —
The bonnie lad that's far awa'."

"The marriage," says Professor Blackie, "was the most honorable and wise act in the life of a great genius, always remarkable for honor, not always for wisdom."

The feelings of the poet at this time are expressed in letters to Mrs. Dunlop and Mrs. Chalmers. To the former he wrote, "I found a once much loved, and still much loved, female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements; but I enabled her to purchase a shelter." To the latter he says, "I have no cause to repent of my marriage. I have not got polite tittle-tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress; I am not sickened and disquieted by the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country. A certain late publication of Scotch poems she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads in the country, as she has the finest wood note wild I ever heard."

It is not to be wondered at that his muse was busy now that he had leased the farm at Ellisland, and had determined upon housekeeping and farming. He had also been appointed exciseman at fifty pounds a year. This seemed a singular combination of occupations, — farming, chasing smugglers and brewers, and writing poetry. But he was a farmer by choice, an exciseman by necessity, and a poet by nature.

Cf. To Dr. Blacklock, 1789.

Burns took possession of the farm in June, and Jean remained at Mauchline until the house should be ready. He was homesick, and wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, "A solitary inmate of an old smoky spence, far from every object I love or by whom I am beloved, nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except Jenny Geddes, the old mare I ride on." What a change from the society of Edinburgh gentry!

I LOVE MY JEAN.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

"WHEN he was not in Ayrshire in bodily presence," says Shairp, "he was there in spirit. It was at such a time that, looking up to the hills that divide Nithsdale from Ayrshire, he breathed to his wife this most natural and beautiful of all his love lyrics."

The tenderness, delicacy, humor, and passion of his songs render them unequalled in the lyrics of the world. It is no wonder that his countrymen sang by turns the Psalms of David and the songs of Burns, for in these as nowhere else are breathed the sentiments and the emotions of a common humanity. Both the Hebrew and the Scotch lyrics are the creation and the property of the people; "created by the people, and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user."

I am not sure that justice has yet been done Burns in the matter of his loyalty to the sanctity of marriage, but I am sure justice will be done him ultimately.

By this and the following, *O, Were I on Parnassus' Hill*, written at the same period of separation, he placed his Jean in the position of honor in his own life, and made her known wherever the English language is spoken.

Only the first two stanzas belong to the early poem; later four more were added, but only the last two of these are worthy of a place with the former. No poet's wife, unless it be Wordsworth's, has received equal praise by her husband.

Much has been written upon the fact that at one time Burns uses English in his songs, and at another Scotch. Principal Shairp has said that he was unapproachable when he used his own Scotch dialect,

and that when he wrote in English he was seldom more than third rate. Arnold says that the English naturally turn to the poems in their own language because they read easily, but in them is not the real Burns. The real Burns is in the Scotch poems, in a world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners. At the same time he says, "This world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet; it is often a harsh, a sordid, a repulsive world."

It is undoubtedly true that Burns is at his best in his own Scottish; and yet there is one poem, *To Mary in Heaven*, which is unsurpassed in strength, grace, pathos, and power, though there is not a single Scotch word in it. It is yet true that pity, playfulness, tenderness, satire, and the natural lilt so characteristic of song, are expressed by Burns through the medium of the Scotch, and not a little of the charm of his work is due to this fact.

O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL!

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

THIS is another compliment to Mrs. Burns. "The latter half of the second stanza," says Douglas, "has often been instanced as the very perfection of personal description in a love-song."

i. 7. *Corsincon*. A hill at the base of which the Nith enters Dumfriesshire.

"We'll sing the nicht, Jean Armour's praise,
  She's worthy o' a sang,
For it was Burns her ain guidman
  That raised her bin the thrang.
While bleechin' claes on Mauchline braes
  By Rab she first was seen,
When Cupid's darts pierced baith the hearts
  O' Burns and bonnie Jean.

Jean was the jewel o' his heart,
  The apple o' his e'e,
And little kent that country maid
  That she a queen wad be.
For to us lang she'll reign in sang,
  And gain oor high esteem;
She prov'd through life a faithfu' wife,
  Our poet's bonnie Jean."

GEORGE DOBIE.

In 1792 Burns wrote to his friend Cunningham, and congratulated him upon his marriage: "Well, then, the scale of good wifeship I divide into ten parts: good-nature, four; good sense, two; wit, one; personal charms, viz., a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage, all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to or attending on a wife, such as fortune, connections, education (I mean education extraordinary), family, blood, etc., divide the two remaining degrees among them as you please; only remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them entitled to the dignity of an *integer*."

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

"ANOTHER wild, stormful song," says Carlyle, "that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *M'Pherson's Farewell*, words that we never listen to without a strange, half-barbarous, half-poetic feeling."

This poem was a result of Burns's third Highland tour.

M'Pherson was a noted freebooter, "a shaggy Northland Cacus," executed at Banf, November, 1700. His body was buried on Gallow-hill, beneath the gallows tree. His sword and shield were deposited in the Earl of Fife's armory at Duffhouse. When M'Pherson came to the fatal tree he called for his violin, and played the tune to which he has bequeathed his name. He then said he would give the violin to any one who would play the tune over his body at the lyke-wake. As no one answered he broke it over the executioner's head, and flung himself from the ladder.

M'Pherson when in jail under sentence composed the *real* lament. The chorus is: —

"But dantinly and wantonly,
And rantinly I'll gae,
I'll play a tune, and dance it roun'
Below the gallows tree."

David Herd, *Scottish Songs* v. 1, p. 99, has preserved the old ballad. An incident in Tennyson's early life, when he was wont to visit the

Carlyles at Chelsea, is associated with this poem. "On one occasion when the poet stayed late, his hosts dismissed him by singing *M'Pherson's Farewell*, a tune which Carlyle called 'rough as hemp, but strong as a lion.' The rude tune and stirring words moved Tennyson so much that his 'face grew darker,' and his lips quivered." — ARTHUR WAUGH.

AULD LANG SYNE.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1796.)

BURNS ascribed this song to an old minstrel. He sent it to Mrs. Dunlop, saying "Light be the turf on the breast of the heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment." The fragment was by Francis Sempill of Beltrees, who died in 1683.

A comparison of these songs will reveal the superiority of Burns's work.

The first stanza of the old is: —

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone?"

"The Sempills kept the lamp of Doric song lighted during the seventeenth century." — E. GOSSE.

Professor Blackie says, "This poem of Burns's is as characteristically Scottish as the heather on the brae, or the pine-tree in the glen; and the Scot who does not sing it heartily whenever he has a fine social opportunity is a poor creature, though he had all the symphonies of Beethoven, and all the Greek of the Athenian dramatists, reeling through his brain."

Carlyle says, "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-colored 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.

"Many a glowing image of youthful love he has left us, the best of them as delicate and pure in their passion as ever lyrics were; and

here (in *John Anderson*) the circle of fervid verse is completed by the most perfect utterance of old and faithful affection." — MRS. OLIPHANT.

"In songs like *Auld Lang Syne*," says Shairp, "Burns has approached nearer to the Biblical severity, such as we find in the words of Naomi, or one of the old Hebrew patriarchs, than any other modern poet."

One needs to hear this song as it is sung in Scotland at the breaking up of a social gathering, then the pulse will beat and the tears start.

There are two versions to the poem, one in Johnson's Museum, and another in Thomson's collection. In the latter the second stanza as here given comes last, and the last line of the first stanza is: —

"And days o' lang syne."

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1788.)

THE chorus of this song is old, and only the two stanzas are by Burns. The air is English, and was a favorite with Mary Stuart.

Burns at another time added four more verses, the last of which is: —

"The plough stands frozen in the fur,
And down the sun comes rarely;
Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early."

Any one who has ever lived in the country upon a farm can appreciate these sentiments.

"From naked groves nae birdie sings;
The shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings;
The breeze nae od'rous flavor brings
From Borean cave;
And droyning Nature droops her wings
Wi' visage grave.
Mankind but scanty pleasures glean
Frae snowy hill and barren plain
When Winter, midst his nipping train
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift o'er a' his bleak domain
And guides the weir."

Daft Days. — FERGUSSON.

MY BONNIE MARY.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

It is said that when Burns recited this poem to his brother Gilbert, as a relic of the old minstrelsy, Gilbert said, "It is beautiful, the most heroic of lyrics. O Robert! if you would write oftener that way, your fame would be sure." The song was written as a compliment to a young officer about to go to a foreign shore. His boat lay at Berwick-law, and as he embarked a young lady stood upon the pier bidding him adieu. She is the bonnie Mary of the song. One stanza of the old song by Alexander Lesley, 1636, reminds one of the first stanza by Burns: —

> "Ye'll bring me here a pint of wine,
> A server and a silver tassie;
> That I may drink before I gang
> A health to my ain bonnie lassie."

Some texts give as title to this poem, *The Silver Tassie.*

ii. 4. *Thick:* some texts give *deep.*

This poem was sent to Mrs. Dunlop with *Auld Lang Syne.*

1789.

For about eight months Burns was busy building the farmhouse, tending his crops, and enjoying the freedom of a citizen of the world. At one time he might be seen on horseback chasing a smuggler, at another angling in the river or musing upon its banks, and again assisting in building a wall. "Did he ever put his hand to the wark?" was asked of one of his hired men. "Ay, that he did, mony a time," was the reply. "If he saw us like to be beat wi' a big stane, he would cry, 'Bide a wee,' and come rinning. We soon found out when he put to his hand; he beat a' I ever met for a dour lift."

He completed the modest house of kitchen, bedroom, and garret, early in this year, and the business of making it a home began. Armour had given Jean some store of plenishing, and had used his skill as a mason to carve a punch-bowl of Inverary marble for Burns.

Mrs. Dunlop gave a beautiful heifer; still another friend gave a plough. Their furniture was ordered in Mauchline, and their servants were hired in Ayrshire.

"When all was ready," says Shairp, "Burns bade his servant, Betty Smith, take a bowl of salt, and place the family Bible on the top of it, and bearing these walk into the new house, and possess it. He himself, with his wife on his arm, followed."

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

Burns writes, "One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields sowing some grass-seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighboring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones."

Burns cursed the man, and at the same time threatened to throw him into the Nith.

Cunningham says that he once met the man, Thomson, who was the unhappy subject of this poem. He alluded to Burns's threat; and "I asked," says Cunningham, "'Could he hae done it?' — 'Could he hae done it!' exclaimed he with wonder; 'deil a doubt but that he could hae done it; he was mair than a match for most men.'"

The place where Burns met Thomson is as interesting to the tourist as that other where he turned up the daisy. It was a favorite musing-place of the poet, where he composed *Tam O' Shanter*, and many of his loveliest lyrics. The verse-form of this poem, the inverted quatrain, was made popular by Tennyson.

"No poet ever felt more deeply the sorrows of created things," says Stopford Brooke, "nor stronger anger at their slaughter for sport. The *Wounded Hare* will live in men's memories when hares are no longer shot for sport."

"This, which is one of the best of the very few good poems which Burns composed in classical English, is no mere sentimental effusion, but expresses what in him was a real part of his nature." — Shairp.

Cf. Notes to *Banks of Nith*, and *Tam O' Shanter*.

Burns, on scaring some waterfowl in Loch-Turit, wrote: —

" 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.

. . . . . .

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."

iii. This stanza was corrected by Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh, to whom Burns referred the work for criticism. The original was: —

" Seek, mangled innocent, some wonted form;
That wonted form, alas! thy dying bed,
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy blood-stained bosom warm."

The original had five stanzas, the following of which (and perhaps the best) was suppressed: —

" Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe;
The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side,
Ah! helpless nurslings, who will now provide
That life a mother only can bestow?"

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

THIS subject had inspired poets and painters before Burns gave it new life. The oldest form is: —

" John Anderson my jo, John,
Come in as ye gae by,
And ye shall get a sheep's-head
Weel baken in a pie;

Weel baken in a pie, John,
And haggis in a pat,
John Anderson my jo, John,
Come in an' ye'se get that."

Another reminds us of Burns: —

"John Anderson my jo, John,
Frae year to year we've past,
And soon that year maun come, John,
Will bring us to our last:
But let nae that affright us, John,
Our hearts were ne'er our foe,
While in innocent delight we've lived,
John Anderson my Jo."

Although Burns took the idea of this song from the old version, it is said that the John of Burns's poem was a native of Ayrshire and a carpenter by trade. He went to Invernesshire to live, and in declining years was visited by Burns. He lies buried in Fort Augustus churchyard, embosomed in the hills that slope down to Lock Ness.

"This poem," says Blackie, "bears the same relation to the love-songs of joy that the mellow sweetness of the fruit in autumn bears to the exuberant flush of vegetation in the spring."

THE HAPPY TRIO.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

THIS poem originated from a meeting of Burns, William Nicol, and Allan Masterton, a musician of Dalswinton. Nicol had bought an estate at Laggan known as Willie's Mill, near to Burns's Ellisland home; and here he spent his vacations. He made some repairs on the house, and when they were completed he celebrated by inviting his two cronies. "We had such a joyous meeting," says Burns, "that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we would celebrate the business."

Burns celebrated this night of gayety in the richest and rarest of all bacchanalian songs; it is absolutely without a rival. The house where they met is still standing.

So much silly prattle has been uttered about Burns being fond of drink as drink, that the brisk and bristling words of Professor Blackie are deserved, "Only a thin-blooded prig," says he, "or a sour pharisee, will take this poem for an exhibition of the poet's familiar habits."

> "Tell you guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's
> I'll be his debt twa Mashlum bonnocks,
> And drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnook's,
> Nine times a week."

"When Nanse heard these lines," says Cunningham, "she exclaimed, 'Nine times a week! Oh! sirs, how these rhymers are gi'en to lying; a hen bird might drink a' at a draught he ever drank in my house. I never saw the color o' his coin.'"

The *Nunc est Bibendum* of Horace, —

> "Drink, comrades, drink; give way to mirth,"

is hardly equal to this song of our poet.

"*Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut* rides sovereign at the head of a troop of bacchanalian verses." — GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

Cf. Horace: *Jam veris Comites*, and Tennyson: *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue.*

iv. 1. *first:* some texts give *last*, as in Currie, 1813. In 1820 Gilbert Burns gave *last*.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

IT seems almost incredible that this poem, and *O, Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, could have been written about the same time; but Burns was a man of moods, and it is but natural that these moods should be registered in his poetry. Carlyle says, "These poems are 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." They are the precious life-blood of a master spirit, and compel reverence.

Highland Mary had died on her return to him from the Highlands in the fall of 1786. This sad event had cast him into profound gloom,

which is revealed more in his prose of that time than in his verse. From that gloom he was partially raised by the event of the first edition of poems and the subsequent visit to Edinburgh. Now, at the anniversary of her death, the old feelings revived, and burst forth in the most plaintive and most pathetic of his love-lyrics.

Mrs. Burns says, "Robert, though ill, had busied himself all day with the sheaves in the field; and as he had got much of the crop in, he was in capital spirits. But when the gloaming came, he grew sad about something; he could not rest. He wandered first up the water-side, and then went to the barnyard; and I followed him, begging him to come in, as he was ill, and the air was cold and sharp. He always promised, but still remained where he was, striding up and down, and looking at the clear sky, and particularly at a star that shone like another moon." When he came in he composed these verses.

Although the poems written in the Scottish dialect are on the whole more compact, more musical, yet what writer of English has ever surpassed Burns's work in this poem?

In 1842 a simple monument was erected over the grave of Highland Mary in the old West Kirkyard, Greenock. It bears this inscription: —

TO HIGHLAND MARY.

O Mary! dear departed shade,
Where is thy place of blissful rest?

The Burns Club of Greenock have the care of the plot; and as a consequence are to be seen there the flowers and plants loved by the poet, — the rose, the honeysuckle, and the daisy.

The poet Campbell writes: —

"Who that has melted o'er his lay,
To Mary's soul in Heaven above,
But pictur'd sees, in fancy strong,
The landscape and the live-long day,
That smil'd upon their mutual love?
Who that has felt forgets the song?"

Whittier asks: —

"But who his human heart has laid
To Nature's bosom nearer?
Who sweetened toil like him, or paid
To love a tribute dearer?"

John Stuart Blackie, in advocating the use of Scotch songs in the public meetings of Scotland, says, "If choice were to be made between classical education and Scottish song, I would say at once, burn Homer, burn Aristotle, fling Thucydides into the sea, but let us by all means on our Scottish hills and by our Scottish streams have *Highland Mary*, *Auld Lang Syne*, and *Scots Wha hae wi' Wallace Bled*."

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

THE chorus of this song is old, the rest is Burns's composition.

In this poem we see the Celtic element in Burns's nature asserting itself. He loved Ossian, and he had the Gaelic love of nature. Perhaps in no modern Scot has this characteristic revealed itself so prominently as in John Stuart Blackie. Although a Lowlander, he not only loved the Highlands, but became the champion of the Crofters against English usurpation. He built him a house on the west coast at Oban, amid the sea and the isles, the moors and the mountains.

Here is a stanza of Duncan Ban's *Ben Dorain*, translated by Professor Blackie: —

"And sweeter to my ear
Is the concert of the deer
In their roaring,
Than when Erin from her lyre
Warmest strains of Celtic fire
May be pouring;
And no organ sends a roll
So delightsome to my soul,
As the branchy-crested race
When they quicken their proud pace,
And bellow on the face
Of Ben Dorain."

For an excellent rendering of the spirit of the Highlands read Blackie's *Lays of the Highlands and Islands*.

There is nothing more pathetic in Scottish history than the depopulating of the Highlands. Entire glens have given up their inhabitants

to make room for the English farmer. Professor Blackie says that he passed the length of one of these glens, and saw only heaps of ruined clachans from which the people had been driven, and at the bottom of the strath on the seacoast he found a city of refuge where the crofters had huddled. He sings: —

"Bonnie Strathnavar! Sutherland's pride,
Sweet is the breath of the birks on thy side;
But where is the blue smoke that curled from the glen
When thy lone hills were dappled with dwellings of men?"

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

Dr. Blacklock, the Edinburgh Mæcenas, was the first of the literary friends of the poet. It was at his suggestion that the second edition of the poems was issued. His love and esteem were always of the greatest assistance to Burns. His simple and sweet Christian nature made him kindly with his kind, and he viewed the frailties of his fellow-mortals with tenderness and sympathy. Poetry had been to him, in his perpetual blindness, as it was to Coleridge, its own "exceeding great reward. It soothed his afflictions, it multiplied and refined his enjoyments, it endeared solitude, it gave him the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that met and surrounded him." He is called in Scotland "the discoverer of Robert Burns."

On one occasion Burns had sent him a letter by Robert Heron; but it miscarried, and the good man wrote the following characteristic verses: —

"Dear Burns, brother of my heart,
Both for thy virtues and thy art;
If art it may be called in thee,
Which Nature's beauty, large and free,
With pleasure in thy breast diffuses,
And warms thy soul with all the Muses.
Whether to laugh with easy grace,
Thy numbers move the sage's face,
Or bid the softer passions rise,
And ruthless souls with grief surprise,

'Tis Nature's voice, distinctly felt
Thro' thee her organ, thus to melt.

Most anxiously we wish to know
With thee of late how matters go;
How keeps thy much lov'd Jean her health?
What promises thy farm of wealth?
Whether the Muse persists to smile,
And all thy anxious cares beguile?
Whether bright fancy keeps alive?
And how thy darling infants thrive?

For me, with grief and sickness spent,
Since I my journey homeward bent,
Spirits depressed, no more I mourn,
But vigor, life, and health return.
No more to gloomy thoughts a prey,
I sleep all night, and live all day;
By turns my book and friend enjoy,
And thus my circling hours employ;
Happy, while yet these hours remain,
If Burns could join the cheerful train
With wonted zeal, sincere and fervent
Salute once more his humble servant,

THOMAS BLACKLOCK."

ii. 1. *Heron:* Author of a history of Scotland, and of a life of Burns.

iii. 6. "He ventured the soul, and I risk'd the body" (*Jolly Beggars*).

In 1792, in writing to Mrs. Dunlop about his children, Burns said: "I hope, if I am spared with them, to show a set of boys that will do honor to my cares and name; but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor. A girl should always have a fortune."

Cf. Wordsworth, *To the Sons of Burns*.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

THE hero of this humorous poem was a zealous Scotch antiquary, and a lover of wit and wine. Burns met him at Friars-Carse, where

antiquaries were wont to assemble. The two became interested in each other; and the meeting was a happy one for them, and for all readers of Burns, as it gave us two of his most characteristic poems.

The burly Scotch of this poem is in striking contrast to the smooth English of *To Mary in Heaven.* Scotch was the language of the "ingle creek," the song and the sermon.

i. 2. *Maidenkirk:* Kirkmaiden in Wigtonshire, in the south of Scotland.

TAM GLEN.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

Of the love-songs of Scotland, Professor Blackie says, "They are as rich and various as the flowers of the field, and poured out from all quarters as spontaneously and as sweetly as the song of the mavis in May. Delicate and daintily sly in its humor, *Tam Glen* is the work of a master hand."

"This is the title of an old song and older Scottish air. Burns's song no sooner made its appearance than it became a favorite; it was sung in the field and at the fireside. Husbandman as he met husbandman slapped his thigh and said, —

'The very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!'"

Cunningham.

1790.

TAM O' SHANTER.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

We have seen that despondency came to Burns with the return of autumn. This was due partly to his ill luck as a farmer, but more to increasing family cares.

Although this year yields but little poetry, yet one such work as *Tam o' Shanter* makes it memorable.

When Burns met Captain Grose at Friars-Carse he invited him to visit Alloway Kirk, and make a drawing of it for his sketches of

the *Antiquities of Scotland;* and he replied, "Write you a poem on the scene, and I'll put in the verses with an engraving of the ruin."

On the "fitting day and hour" Burns composed this marvellous piece of work. Mrs. Burns tells us that the poem was the work of one day. Burns had spent most of the day by the Nithside, and in the afternoon she joined him with the children. He was "crooning to himself," while she remained at a distance, lest she disturb him; soon attracted by his wild gesticulations, she found him with the tears rolling down his cheeks, reciting these lines: —

> "Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
> A' plump and strapping in their teens."

"I wish you had seen him," says she, "he was in such ecstasy.

The following notes and comments I condense from the work of Allan Cunningham. The original Tam was one named Douglas Grahame, a Carrick farmer. Shanter is the name of a farm which Grahame owned. Burns, when a boy, had met the man often, and had viewed his drinking bouts with his brother-in-law. Tam's wife discouraged these habits, and often when he returned at evening to his home she lectured him so severely that he would return to the alehouse for the night.

l. 28. *Kirkton Jean:* Kirkton is the name of any place where the parish church is located. Jean Kennedy kept a public house at Kirkoswald.

l. 32. *Alloway's kirk:* Here are buried the members of the Burns family. See Wordsworth's poem, *At the Grave of Burns.*

l. 206. *Brig:* Auld Brig o' Doon.

l. 218. *Scarce a stump:* It is said that once Grahame tied his mare at the door of a public house; and while he was in the house with his ale, the boys plucked away the hairs of the mare's tail for fish-lines. Grahame attributed this to the work of witches. The witches in the kirk is also based upon an old story common at the times. The Scotch people are as proud of this poem as they are of *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

"The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer

aspects of war; nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love, though immoderate — from convivial pleasures, though intemperate. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature, both with reference to himself, and in describing the condition of others. Who but some impenetrable dunce, or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever saw without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o' Shanter?" — WORDSWORTH.

"Auld Alloway Kirk" stands not far from the poet's birthplace. It is now roofless; but the walls are strengthened and adorned with the abundant ivy — "fall to prevent, or beautify decay."

Scott writes in his diary (1825): "I seem to gain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which in younger days I used to enjoy a Tam o' Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain, the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did."

Kirkoswald people to this day claim Tam, Kate, Cutty Sark, and Souter Johnny.

Tam o' Shanter Inn is situated on High Street, Ayr, and has long been a very interesting memorial of the poet. In 1892 it was sold at auction because the Weaver's Incorporation which owned it became extinct, and it then reverted to the Crown. The Town Council asked the Crown to give it to that organization to be kept as a memorial; but the request was refused, and the inn was put up at public roup. It was bought by Councilman Fraser, for £3,190, and has not been diverted from its memorial purposes.

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON.

(*Edinburg Ed.*, 1793.)

BURNS lost many friends during this year, and this, added to his other trials, made him very despondent; but yet he found time and inclination to write noble memorial verses, and to remodel songs for the *Museum*. "*The Elegy on Captain Henderson*," says Burns, "is a

tribute to the memory of a man I loved much." The captain was a retired soldier of character and influence. He lies in Greyfriars churchyard, near the monument erected to Duncan Ban.

Everywhere Burns treats nature as the companion and associate of man. In this poem his appeal to nature is in the spirit of the old Greeks, — in sympathy with the mood of the poet. See Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, *Burns*, p. 224, and Stopford Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets* (*Burns*). "The poem is full of most truthful references to outward nature; and the whole is fused with an extraordinary intensity of feeling, paralleled only in the *Lycidas* of Milton, and the *Adonais* of Shelley. — J. VEITCH.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1790.)

IN this song the poet breathes the sentiments of one who has left his native heath for the smoke and noise of London. Burns's sympathies are universal; there is nothing in the realm of God's creative works which is not linked to him by these fellow-feelings.

Cf. Ian Maclaren's *In the Days of Auld Lang Syne* for similar longing for Scotland by one who went to the city.

Cf. Wordsworth's *Reverie o' Poor Susan.*

1791.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

I AM not able to give the exact date of this poem; but as Burns's letter acknowledging the receipt of the snuff-box from Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable is dated April 25, 1791, I conclude that this poem belongs to the early days of 1791. In return for the present, Burns sent this poem. The Maxwells lost many of their estates in the cause of the Stuarts. Here Queen Mary fled after the fatal event of Langside. Ruins of the old baronial castle on the Nith are still to be seen.

"This is one of the greatest triumphs of simple art won through the natural power of contrast, often so mysteriously manifested between nature and our human lot, especially the joy of heaven and earth, and our despondency, or even awful sorrow." — J. VEITCH.

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

THE noble earl deserves a place beside the gracious Dr. Blacklock among the friends of Burns. The earl first met Burns in Edinburgh, and at once interested himself in his welfare. He introduced him to Creech, the Edinburgh publisher of note, and, as a result, through him was issued the second edition of the poems. In 1787 Burns had written some verses in honor of his patron; but the earl, from motives of modesty, did not wish them published, and the poet did not preserve them. Burns at one time hoped to gain a pension, or post of remuneration, through the earl's influence. He wrote to Dr. Moore, "I had immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise." It was such feeling that inspired this pathetic poem.

Charles Kingsley says of the age in which Burns wrote, "Looking around him in such a time, with his keen power of insight, his keen sense of humor, what was there to worship? One feels painfully in his poems the want of great characters, and still more painfully that he has not drawn them simply because they were not there to draw. That he has a true eye for what is noble when he sees it, let his *Lament for Glencairn* testify."

Burns named one of his sons James Glencairn Burns. He was educated at Christ's Hospital by the earl, and afterwards became captain in the army in India.

When Burns was ornamenting his farmhouse at Ellisland, he hung the portraits of Dr. Blacklock and the Earl of Glencairn over his parlor chimney-piece. Beneath the portrait of the earl he wrote: —

"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 inspire."

Burns wrote to the sister of the lord, "My dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn." Had this man lived, Burns would not have died in poverty and want.

Cf. Tennyson, *In the Garden at Swainston.*

THE BANKS O' DOON.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1792.)

THERE were three poems on the Doon, of which this and the following are the best.

VERSION PRINTED IN THE MUSICAL MUSEUM.

(*Cromek's Reliques*, 1808.)

In sending this poem to a friend, in March, 1791, Burns wrote, "While here I sit sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heaven! I say to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, 'Auld Toon o' Ayr,' conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantyne." This was the second version, and the one which is usually meant when *The Banks o' Doon* is mentioned.

It is in such poems as this that we get the full significance of the Scotch dialect, — its grace and flexibility, its richness in vocal sounds, its warmth and color, its capacity for the finest breath of sentiment, and its atmosphere of homely, hearty melody. I believe that a vital acquaintance with these songs will do much to quicken in the young a love of simple, natural, wholesome music.

Robert Louis Stevenson says, "When the English language was becoming more pedantic and inflexible, and English letters more colorless and slack, there was another dialect in a sister country, and a different school of poetry. The dialect was written colloquially,

which kept it fresh and supple; and although not shaped for heroic flights, it was a direct and vivid medium for all that had to do with social life."

It is this same dialect which gives to the works of Ian Maclaren their chief charm as prose idyls.

Another version, the earliest, given by Douglas, is as follows: —

"Sweet are the banks — the banks o' Doon,
The spreading flowers are fair,
And everything is blythe and glad,
But I am free o' care.
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause Luve was true:
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon
To see the woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And sae did I o' mine:
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause Luver staw the rose,
And left the thorn wi' me:
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourished on the morn,
And sae was pu'd on noon."

The two versions given here are the accepted versions, but they are made up of the three given by Douglas.

Many are the rivers which have found immortality in song; but in this poem, the most perfect in any language, the Doon is most fittingly enshrined. To stand upon the old Tam O'Shanter bridge in sight of Burns's memorial; to wander on the banks of this beautiful river in the quiet of the evening, as the scent of the wild-flowers is borne upon the breeze, and the murmur of the stream is the only

sound to be heard, — puts one in tune with the sense and the soul of the poetry written here. There is no place in the district so attractive to the lover of Burns as this retired spot.

"Some thirty years ago A. Tennyson went over Burns's ground at Dumfries. When he was one day by Doon side — 'I can't tell how it was, Fitz, but I fell into a passion of tears' — and A. T. was not given to the melting mood at all" (Edward Fitzgerald to Fanny Kemble).

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON.

(*Edinburgh Ed.*, 1793.)

BURNS was invited by the Earl of Buchan to come to the coronation of the bust of Thomson on Ednam Hill, at Dryburgh, on the 22d of September, 1791. The poet was reaping when the invitation came; he stopped work, walked along the Nith, and composed this poem, which he sent to the Earl of Buchan.

The Earl composed the following for the coronation of the bust of Burns at the foot of a statue of Wallace which he had erected near Dryburgh in 1814:—

"Poet of Coila, here at Wallace's feet,
Thy generous muse, thy manly soul, I greet,
Thy soul, now severed from a servile crew,
And blest, united to the chosen few!
Too late I found thee, to redeem thy days
From bloated joys and ill-directed lays;
But now I come, even with thy setting sun,
To see to thee some tardy justice done.
Upon thy bust, as once on Thomson's, I
Impose this chaplet, with a genial sigh;
And may our brave, unconquer'd country's fire
Still glow in song, and sparkle from her lyre."

AFTON WATER.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1792.)

LOCKHART says, "This poem Burns sent to Mrs. Stewart of Stair, one of the first to admire his poetry."

Afton is an Ayrshire stream which flows into the Nith. There has

been much controversy as to who is the heroine of the song; but the best evidence points to Highland Mary, who was buried in the kirk-yard at Greenock.

The following quotation accompanied the original: "I charge ye, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up my love — my dove, my undefiled! The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land" (R. B.).

Cf. Yarrow Visited by Wordsworth, for similar spirit.

AE FOND KISS.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1792.)

THE close of this year was one of the saddest in the life of our poet. It was now demonstrated that he had made a poet's, not a farmer's choice. His crops did not yield him any adequate return for the money he had expended. He had used the proceeds remaining from the sale of the second edition of his poems. In August he decided to sell the crops, and give up the lease, and in November the farming business was wound up.

"It is not without deep regret," says Shairp, "that even now we think of Burns's departure from this beautiful spot. If there was any position on earth in which he could have been happy and fulfilled his genius, it would have been on such a farm."

He moved to a house in what is now known as Burns Street, near the lower end of Bank Vennel in Dumfries. Here the society was not conducive to regular habits, either of business or art. He was thrown in the company of an idle set, much to the injury of his reputation among the steady-going peasantry.

When in Edinburgh, Burns met Mrs. M'Lehose, who was a woman of taste and refinement. She had great appreciation of his poetry, and a lively correspondence resulted; but it lagged somewhat after Burns's marriage. When he heard that she was about to go to the West Indies, he hastened to her in Edinburgh. This and the poem, *My Nannie's Awa*, were addressed to her. Doubtless one of them refers to this

parting. Scott said, "These poems contain the essence of a thousand love tales." "The last half of the second stanza (first poem) suggested to Byron the motto for the *Bride of Abydos*." — CUNNINGHAM.

1792.

SOON after Burns settled at Dumfries, it happened that Mr. George Thomson, who was making a collection of Scottish songs, desired him to contribute, and to assist in arranging the old songs. Thomson wrote: "For the honor of Caledonia I would fain hope the writer of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be able to present the public with a collection infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared." Burns replied: "As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost by the impulse of enthusiasm. Only don't hurry me. . . . In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend I shall receive as a favor. In the rustic phrase of the season, 'Gude speed the work.'"

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1792.)

IT is claimed by Lockhart that this poem was the result of an adventure Burns once had with smugglers. In February, 1792, a suspicious looking craft was seen in the Solway; and Burns, as excise officer, watched her until he was satisfied of her mission, when, backed by some dragoons whom he had summoned from Dumfries, he proceeded to board her. The vessel was condemned and sold. While Burns was waiting for the dragoons, whom he had sent a brother gauger, Lewars, to summon, he became indignant at the delay, and expressed himself harshly, when the guard suggested that he put the tardy gauger in the pillory by a song, and he at once composed this. Burns sent four carronades which were captured from the brig to the French

Government. They were stopped at Dover, and Burns was quietly reprimanded for lack of patriotism.

Another chorus is: —

"The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' the Exciseman;
He's danced awa, he's danced awa,
He's danced awa wi' the Exciseman."

HIGHLAND MARY.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

In sending this to Thomson, Burns wrote: "The foregoing song pleases myself. I think it is in my happiest manner. You will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days, and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity."

"The poem is an excellent illustration of a certain happy arrangement of syllables, without any sameness of jingle at the ends of the lines. There is scarcely a true rhyme in the whole thirty-two verses, and yet the ear is perfectly satisfied with its musical rhythm." — Douglas.

Among the many interesting events connected with this centenary year in Scotland is that of the dedication of the monument to Highland Mary at Dumbarton, her birthplace.

BESSIE AND HER SPINNIN-WHEEL.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1792.)

In matters of political and social economy Burns is in accord with all the great poets who believe more in man than in machines. Goldsmith sang: —

"A bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

Wordsworth, in *The Excursion* (Book VIII.), gives a luminous picture of modern industrialism in its tendency to crush individuality in the interest of the machine. The picture is familiar to us.

> "Men, maidens, youths,
> Mother and little children, boys and girls,
> Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
> Within this temple, where is offered up
> To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
> Perpetual sacrifice."

Professor Blackie says, "The Celtic girl who stands by a spinning-machine in some titanic Glasgow manufactory, merely to correct its occasional false strokes, is a much less hearty, a much less noble, and a much less interesting creature in every respect, than the Highland nighean of a hundred years ago in a breezy hill cottage, who could spin and weave with her own hands, and milk the cow, and attend the dairy, and do a half dozen other things beside."

BONNIE LESLEY.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1798.)

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 1792, Burns says, "Such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting, the other day, with Miss Leslie Baillie, your neighbor. Mr. Baillie, with his two daughters, passing through Dumfries the other day on their way to England, did me the honor of calling on me; on which I took my horse, and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine when I left them, and riding home I composed this song. You must know there is an old ballad beginning with, —

> 'My bonnie Lizzie Baillie,
> I'll rowe ye in my plaidie.'"

DUNCAN GRAY.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1798.)

This rival of the racy and humorous *Auld Robin Gray* of Lady Barnard, and *Come Under My Plaidie*, of McNeil, was sent to Thom-

son with these words: "Duncan Gray is that kind of light horse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling force." Cunningham says Wilkie, the artist, made one of his best pictures out of the last four lines of the first stanza.

ii. 3. *Ailsa Craig:* a rocky islet in the Firth of Clyde, near Ayr.

ii. 7. "Hon. Arthur Erskine wrote to the poet, 'This is a line of itself that should make you immortal.'" — DOUGLAS.

John Stuart Blackie wrote many songs for the *Scottish Students' Song-Book*, one of which is a parody on this poem. It alludes to one who had a hard time in his Greek.

"Saml. Sumph cam' here for Greek.
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't!
Frae Dunnet Head he cam' for Greek.
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't.
Brains he had na unco much,
His schooling was a crazy crutch,
But like the crab he had a clutch;
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't!"

He finally got through, and became a leader in the church: —

"In the kirk assembly he
Sits as big as big can be,
Moderator Sam, D.D. —
That's the crown o' the Greeking o't!"

Burns wrote an earlier song to this tune for Johnson's *Museum*, but it is much inferior to this.

1793.

GALLA WATER.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1793.)

DURING this year Burns was busy writing for Thomson. He had now returned to his native language, and with most excellent results. When Thomson asked for his assistance, Burns replied, "If you are for English verses, there is on my part an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad or the pathos of the song, I can only hope

to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue." It is doubtless to Burns's visit to the Highlands that we owe this splendid song. He had touched up an old song for the *Museum* at an earlier date, and the lilt so possessed him that at the sight of the lovely river he burst forth in song. Galla Water rises in Midlothian, and joins the Tweed near Abbotsford. It has had an honored place in song.

Cf. Yarrow Unvisited, Wordsworth.

The old song which Burns's version supplanted is worth noting: —

Chorus — Braw, braw lads o' Gala Water,
Bonnie lads o' Gala Water;
London lads will ne'er compare
Wi' the braw, braw lads o' Gala Water.

Tho' barley rigs are fair to see,
Flocks o' sheep are meikle better;
And oats will shake on a windy day,
When the lambs will play by Gala Water.
Braw, braw lads, etc.

London lads are black wi' reek,
Tevi'dale lads are little better;
But let them a' say what they will,
The gree gaes ay down Gala Water.
Braw, braw lads, etc.

There's Blindilee and Torwoodlee,
And Galashiels that rides the water;
But young Ha'tree he bears the gree
Of a' the Pringles o' Gala Water.
Braw, braw lads, etc.

Pringle was the laird of Gala Hill, and the name still survives in Galashiels. The tourist by the Waverley route now sees the manufacturing town of Galashiels where, in the time of this ballad, there was only a few thatched houses on the Selkirk side of the water." — W. C. Douglas.

When Burns sent this to Thomson in January, he wrote, "Many returns of the season to you, my dear sir. How comes on your publication? Will this be of any service to you?"

In the chorus of some texts we have *There's* prefixed to first verse; and in the second, *Ye wander thro'* for *They rove amang*.

WANDERING WILLIE.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1793.)

THE old song published by Herd, vol. ii., p. 140: —

"Here awa, there awa, here awa, Willie,
Here awa, there awa, here awa, hame,"

must have suggested these verses.

Professor Blackie says in his *Scottish Song*, "Of these love-songs of parting, not a few of the best are by Burns, the fire and force of whose amorous passion, when in full career of enjoyment, was not more significant of his intensely songful and soulful nature than the deep pathos and delicate tenderness of his strains of bereavement."

This song is a revision of the following, Burns's first draft: —

"Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ae only dearie,
And telt me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.
Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was na the blast brought the tear to my e'e:
Now welcome the summer, and welcome my Willie,
The summer to nature, my Willie to me.

Ye hurricanes rest in the care of your slumbers,
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
But if he's forgotten his faithfullest Nannie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But dying believe that my Willie's my ain."

Both Mrs. Walter Riddel and Mrs. M'Lehose have been mentioned as the heroine of this poem.

JESSIE.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1798.)

"THE heroine of this poem was Jessie Staig, daughter of Provost Staig of Dumfries. She married the son of the Laird of Dalswinton, the poet's old landlord. She died in early life, but her beauty and

gentleness are still remembered." — CUNNINGHAM. She died at the age of twenty-six, and was buried in Dumfries churchyard.

Burns wrote to Thomson (1793), "One hint let me give you, — whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one *iota* of the original Scottish airs, I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect."

THE SODGER'S RETURN.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1793.)

SCOTT tells us that when Burns visited Edinburgh, 1786–1787, he saw him at the house of Professor Fergusson, and that he remembered how Burns was affected by a print of Bunbury's representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery beside him, and his widow, with a child in her arms, standing by. Underneath were these lines: —

"Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain," etc.

"He actually shed tears," says Scott, "and asked whose lines they were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered. Burns rewarded me with a look and a word which I still recollect with great pleasure."

This poem was suggested by Burns seeing an old soldier pass the door of the inn at Brownhill, near Dumfries. He called him in, and got him to tell him stories of war.

This pathetic ballad makes an excellent setting for the *Scots wha' hae*. For richness and variety of heart experience Burns is a rival of Shakespeare; most of our loves and our tears are reflected in his work.

The air of this song is taken from one of Ramsay's, "The Mill, the Mill, O."

"Beneath a green shade, I fand a fair maid
Was sleeping sound and still, O,
A' lowing wi' love, my fancy did rove
Around her wi' good will, O."

"This poem," says Cunningham, "was sung in every vale, and on every hill, in every cot-house, village, and town."

LOGAN BRAES.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

BURNS wrote to Thomson: "Have you ever, my dear sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains, who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day I recollected the air of 'Logan Water.' If I have done anything at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's lucubrations in my elbow chair, ought to have some merit."

An old song is as follows: —

"By Logan Streams that rin sae deep,
Fu' aft wi' glee I've herded sheep;
I've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes,
Wi' my dear lad on Logan braes.
But wae's my heart, thae days are gane,
And fu' o' grief I herd my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far from me and Logan braes."

THERE WAS A LASS.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

IN his letter to Thomson, Burns says: "I have just finished the following ballad, and as I think it in my best style I send it to you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's wood-note wild, is very fond of it." The heroine is Miss M'Murdo of Drumlanrig, and Burns sent the song to the family. Mr. Clarke was a music-teacher in the M'Murdo family.

BANNOCKBURN.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

WHEN Burns visited Galloway he was accompanied by fellow exciseman Mr. Syme, who preserved a record of the journey. Mr. Syme says that after visiting Mr. Gordon at Kenmure, they passed over the moors to Gatehouse in a wild storm: "The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil. It became lowering and dark, the winds sighed hollow, the lightning gleamed, the thunders rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene. He spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall. It poured in floods upon us; and what do you think Burns was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce at Bannockburn." Two days later, when they were returning from St. Mary's Isle to Dumfries, "he was engaged in the same manner; and the next day he produced me the address of Bruce to his troops, and gave a copy to Dalzell." This seems explicit enough; but when Burns sent it to Thomson he wrote: "There is a tradition which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that the old air *Hey, tuttie, taitie* was Robert Bruce's march at the Battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in yesternight's evening walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air that we might suppose to be the gallant royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning. The accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some struggle of the same nature, *not quite so ancient*, roused my rhyming mania." Burns made the visit to Galloway in July. The above letter was dated September, but there seems to be no serious conflict in the two statements. Christopher North says, "We can more readily believe that Burns wrote 'yesternight's evening walk' to save himself the trouble of entering into any detail of his previous study of the subject, than that Syme told a downright lie." Carlyle says: "This Dithyrambic was composed on horseback, in riding in the middle of a tempest, over the wildest Galloway moor in company with Mr. Syme. So long as there is warm blood in the

heart of Scotchmen or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war ode, the best we believe that was ever written by any man."

In the original letter by Burns, there is a line of patriotic prose in conclusion: "So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty as he did that day! Amen" (R. B.).

If one has ever heard a company of Scotch soldiers sing this noble song, one will not soon forget the thrill and the fervor of it.

Some texts insert *glorious* before victorie in fourth verse, and *Edward* is prefixed to the eighth. In the twelfth, *Traitor*, *Coward*, is found in place of *Let him;* in the sixteenth, *Caledonian* is found in place of *Let him;* and in the twentieth, *Forward* is prefixed.

SONNET ON HEARING A THRUSH SING.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THESE lines were written in Burns's favorite resort, — the woods of Cluden by the side of the Nith. "In summer he loved it," says Cunningham, "for then the ground was covered with daisies and wild hyacinths, the odor of honeysuckle came from the thorn, and the song of the birds from the romantic groves, which, as with a garland, enclose the ruins of Lincluden; and in winter he loved to look on the mingling waters of the Cluden and Nith, and see them swelling from bank to brae." *Cf. A Vision*, p. 211. *Hark! the Mavis*, p. 213.

There are three clearly marked types of the lyric in English poetry, — the lyric of passion uttering itself in the artlessness of art, coming from the heart and going to the heart; the lyric of contemplation, deep and impassioned; and the lyric of careful, deliberate, and pains-taking work; the lyrics of Burns, Wordsworth, and Gray respectively.

DAINTY DAVIE.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

BURNS wrote to Thomson, "The words, 'Dainty Davie,' glide so sweetly in the air, that to a Scot's ear any song to it, without Davie being the hero, would have a lame effect."

Cunningham says, "Dainty Davie is the name of an old merry

song from which Burns has borrowed nothing save the title and the measure. It relates to the adventure of David Williamson, a preacher of the days of the Covenant."

The pleasure the poet had in the work of ballad-making is seen in a letter to Thomson, April, 1793.

"You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment for ballads, your books, etc., ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning-post!), and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say or sing, 'Sae merry as we a' hae been!' and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of *Coila* shall be, 'Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'.'"

1794.

A VISION.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THE ruins of Lincluden, at the junction of the Cluden and the Nith, was a favorite resort of Burns. It was full of historic associations, and suggested to him this vision of Liberty at a time when England and France were at war. The old Abbey was founded in the reign of Malcolm IV.

Cf. Hark! the Mavis, and *Sonnet on Hearing a Thrush Sing.*

The title of the first lyric, of which this is a revision, was *The Minstrel of Lincluden.* Burns had as little sympathy with the political cause of England as had Wordsworth. He had once proposed the toast: "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause."

Cf. Wordsworth, *Prelude.* Book X. 315–330.

"If there did not something else go to the making of literature besides mere literary parts, even the best of them, how long ago the old bards and biblical writers would have been superseded by the learned professors and gentlemanly versifiers of later times! . . . Does any

one doubt that the great poets and artists are made up mainly of the most common universal human and heroic characteristics? Good human stock is the main dependence. No good poet ever appeared except from a race of good fighters, great eaters, good sleepers, and good breeders." — JOHN BURROUGHS.

HARK! THE MAVIS.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

IN 1790 Burns had sent to Johnson's *Museum* an old song, *Ca' the Yowes*, retouched and enlarged. On sending this to Thomson, he wrote, "In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the old chorus which I would preserve." *Cf. A Vision*, and *Sonnet on Hearing a Thrush*.

Professor Veitch says, "There is no love-song worthy of the name in all the Scottish songs, in which the passion is not associated with the scenery."

iii. 1. *Clouden:* A little river near Dumfries.

A RED, RED ROSE.

(*Johnson's Museum*, 1796.)

THE song that suggested these lines to Burns was written by Lieutenant Hinches as a farewell to his sweetheart. The first stanza is: —

"O fare thee well, my dearest dear,
And fare thee well a while;
But I am coming back again,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile."

"This little love-chant has been a universal favorite since it was first given to the world." — DOUGLAS.

"Only those books are for the making of men into which a man has gone in the making. Mere professional skill and sleight of hand, of themselves, are to be apprised as lightly in letters as in war or government, or any kind of leadership. Strong native qualities only avail in the long run; and the more these dominate over the artificial endowments, the more we are refreshed and enlarged." — JOHN BURROUGHS.

MY CHLORIS.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THE heroine of this song, and of the two following, was a flaxen-haired daughter of a farmer at Kemmis Ha', on the banks of the Nith. Her name was Jean Lorimer.

"She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall."

The first song Burns addressed to her (1791) was in the interest of a fellow exciseman, John Gillespie, who was fascinated with her beauty.

The first stanza is: —

"Sweet closes the ev'ning on Craigie-burn-wood,
And blithely awakens the morrow;
But the pride of the spring in the Craigie-burn-wood
Can yield to me nothing but sorrow."

She declined John, and married a man who proved to be a worthless fellow; she refused to live with him, and returned to her parents. Burns had great sympathy for her, and was so much impressed by her beauty that he wrote several songs in her honor. The second song — *Poortith Cauld* — has an element of the sermon in it, but the others are love lyrics. Here is the last stanza: —

"How blest the humble cotter's fate!
He woos his simple dearie;
The silly bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make him eerie."

That Burns's admiration for Chloris was concealed from his wife, or that she resented it, is disproven by the following letter, which Burns wrote to Mr. Lorimer: —

"*My dear Sir*, — I called for you yesternight, but could not find you. I want you to dine with me to-day. I have two honest Midlothian farmers with me, who have travelled three-score miles to renew old friendship with the poet; and I promise you a pleasant party, a plateful of hotch-potch, and a bottle of good sound port. Mrs. Burns desired me, yesternight, to beg the favor of Jeany to come and partake with her; and she was so obliging as to

promise that she would. If you can come I shall take it very kind. Dinner at three.

Yours,

ROBERT BURNS.

To MR. WILLIAM LORIMER, senior, Farmer,
Douglas."

Burns wrote to Mr. Thomson: "I like you for entering so candidly and kindly into the story of '*Ma chère amie*.' Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate; but somehow it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of passion, 'where love is liberty and nature law.'

"Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet, while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulation of the human soul. On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, on my return from the visit, wrought into the following song."

Professor John Stuart Blackie says, "Those who do not understand what Platonic love means may get a better notion of it from this language of our ploughman bard than from all the dialogues of the great Athenian idealist."

i. 1. This is the reading of the MS.; but in 1796 Burns changed it to, "Behold, my love," etc.

i. 4. *flaxen hair:* Changed to *flowing* in 1796.

In another song sent to Thomson, 1794, —

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME BEST OF A',

we have —

"Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyes of a darker blue."

THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

IN November, 1794, Burns wrote to Mr. Thomson of the *Museum* as follows: —

"Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs

of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm and the air exactly, to give you them for your work. A song which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, I have cut down for an English dress to your *Daintie Davie*, as follows."

Burns's first stanza is almost verbatim from Ramsay's, as is the first half of the second; the rest of Ramsay's is as follows: —

"Kind Phœbus now began to rise,
And paint with red the eastern skies;
Struck with the glory of her eyes,
He shrinks behind a cloud, —
Her mantle on a bough she lays,
And all her glory she displays;
She left all nature in amaze,
And skipp'd into the wood, —

The bleating flock that then came by,
Soon as the charming nymph they spy,
They drop their hoarse and rueful cry,
And dance around the brooks.
The woods are glad, the meadows smile,
And *Forth*, which foamed and roar'd erewhile,
Glides calmly down as smooth as oil,
Through all its charming crooks."

"Take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it." — R. B.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

Of this poem Burns wrote, "It has at least the merit of a regular pastoral; the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night are regularly rounded."

Cunningham says, "Those acquainted with the poet's life and habits of study will perceive that he is of that class of poets who wrote best from what they see; they look, and talk, and think, till their feelings and fancy rise into the region of poesy, and then empty their hearts into their verse. Dumfries is a small town; a few steps carried

Burns to green lanes, daisied braesides, and quiet stream-banks. Men returning from labor were sure to meet him 'all under the light of the moon,' sauntering forth as if he had no aim; his hands behind his back, his hat turned up a little behind by the shortness of his neck, and noting all, yet seeming to note nothing. Yet those who got near without being seen might hear him humming some old Scottish air, and fitting verses to it — the scene and the season supplying the imagery, and the Jeanies, the Nancies, the Phillies, and the Jessies of his admiration furnishing bright eyes, white hands, and wavy tresses, as the turn of the song required."

The original as here given had five stanzas; but some texts give only four, omitting the second, — one of the best stanzas in the song.

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

BURNS'S health was now giving way under his stormy experiences; and he says, "I fear I am about to suffer from the follies of my youth." It was at this time that he wrote this exceedingly optimistic song. He intended it as a true picture of himself; for when he sent it to Thomson he wished a vignette of his picture to be prefixed to the song, so that "the portrait of my face and the picture of my mind may go down the stream together."

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1799.)

THE heroine of this poem is not known, although it is probably Mrs. M'Lehose.

Mrs. M'Lehose entertained Burns frequently at her house on Calton Hill, Edinburgh. An intimacy resulted, which is revealed in a long correspondence now published. Of Burns's letters she said, "They are precious memorials of an acquaintance the recollection of which would influence me were I to live till fourscore."

1795.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

We now come to the closing years of Burns's poetical work. From the first he had been a revolutionist, and as such he remained to the last. It was natural that he should uphold the principles of the French Revolution with the same zeal that he showed for the great leaders in Scotland's struggles against oppression. This loyalty to right cost him dearly; yet he was not to be scared nor bought, — he would speak out. On the first day of the new year he gave to the world one of the clearest and soundest songs on Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity that ever came from mortal lips, — "A soul-animating strain," indeed. When these principles shall become the fundamentals of social and political life, Christianity will have passed from creed to life, in which it first manifested itself.

The note of the brotherhood of man and the federation of the world came into English poetry as a result of the Revolution; and the prelusive notes to the chorus of the great singers, Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, were sounded by Cowper and Crabbe.

"Not in Cowper, not in Crabbe," says Stopford Brooke, "not in any of the after poets, was the deep cry of the Revolution more clearly heard than in this fine song. The practical result of much of Burns's poetry in his age was to do similar work to that of Christ."

"Stronger words he never wrote," says Professor Shairp. It has been quoted, they say, by Béranger in France, and by Goethe in Germany, and is the word which springs up in the mind of all foreigners when they think of Burns."

Professor Blackie, in concluding his work *Scottish Song* with this piece, says, "In this song we have the finest combination of practical philosophy, evangelical piety, and political wisdom that ever was put into a popular song. In this song he soars above all party feelings, and merely announces plainly what is the poet's mission, no less than the prophet's, — to preach from the housetop that there is no respect of persons with God."

When Burns sent this to Thomson he wrote, "A great critic (Aiken) on songs says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme."

"Burns was one of the people, and he spoke for the people. He broke the pathetic silence of the toiling multitudes with a voice so sweet and strong and true that it rang into every heart that longs for freedom and into every home where liberty is dear." — E. CHARLTON BLACK.

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

IF the previous poem was characteristic of Burns's social creed, this is as characteristic of his loyalty to his native land when that land was threatened from without. As he had not hesitated to show his love of freedom by praising Washington and criticising the Tory ministry under Pitt, so now, when invasion was threatened from France, he showed his patriotism by joining the Dumfries Volunteers; he had fought with the pen, and he was ready to back up his pen with his sword. This act must have disarmed those political pharisees who saw disloyalty in his attitude toward the revolution in France and America.

"We find him," says Professor Blackie, "in all the dignity of Kerseymere breeches, short blue coat faced with red, and round hat, enrolled in the loyal ranks of the Dumfries Volunteers."

"I remember," says Cunningham, "his swarthy face, his very ploughman stoop, and indifferent dexterity in handling his arms."

The incident which gave rise to this poem was characteristic and natural. Of course it was expected by the volunteers that whenever there was any patriotic speaking to be done, their soldier-poet would be ready with his wit and wisdom. Accordingly, when at a public dinner, Burns was asked to propose a toast, he rose amid rapturous applause and gave the toast, "Gentlemen, may we never see the French, and may the French never see us," there was the greatest dis-

appointment. Burns felt disturbed, and when he returned home wrote these verses.

"This song hit the taste and suited the feelings of the humbler classes. Hills echoed with it; it was heard in every street, and did more to right the mind of the rustic part of the population than all the speeches of Pitt and Dundas." — CUNNINGHAM.

Copies of it in sheet song were distributed to the corps to which Burns belonged.

i. 5. *Corsicon:* A hill near the Nith.

i. 6. *Criffel:* A mountain near the Nith.

The MS. of this poem is in the possession of J. Dick, Esq., Stirling. In it the last two verses of each stanza as here given are repeated, with the exception that in the first stanza the seventh verse begins *we'll ne'er permit*, and in the second, the seventh verse begins *No! never*.

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

(*Geo. Thomson's Coll.*, 1798.)

QUITE as much as Wordsworth, Burns was an open-air poet. He had but a small library; but his *study* was large and airy — nothing less than the woods, the fields, and the streams of his Lowland home. Over these he shed a lustre as unfading as that which the poet of "plain living and high thinking" cast upon the hills and vales of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

"Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen."

This pathetic little song is colored with the sombre hue of the setting of this mighty orb of song.

Mr. Matthew Arnold says: "If I were ever asked where English poetry got these three things, its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully near and vivid way, — I should say, with some doubt, that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt, that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source;

with no doubt at all, that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic."

Mr. Douglas gives the following, which was in pencil MS. in the poet's own hand, — evidently an early draft of this poem.

ON HEARING A BIRD SING WHILE MUSING ON CHLORIS.

" Sing on, sweet songster. O' the brier,
Nae stealthy hunter-foot is near;
O soothe a hapless lover's ear,
And dear as life I'll prize thee.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may learn thy melting art,
For surely that would touch the heart
O' her that still denies me.

O was thy mistress, too, unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
For nocht but Love and Sorrow joined,
Sic notes of woe could wauken.

The nightingale undoubtedly occupies first place in the affection of poets, and the lark is an easy second; it is companion "of the ploughman, the shepherd, the harvester — whose nest is in the stubble, and whose tryst is in the clouds."

Cf. Shelley, *Ode to a Skylark;* Wordsworth, *To a Skylark.*

" Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest be thy dwelling-place —
Oh to abide in the desert with thee!"

HOGG.

INSCRIPTION.

'TIS FRIENDSHIP'S PLEDGE.

THE fate of Burns's Chloris was a sad one. Her father lost his property, and she became a wanderer. She lived in Edinburgh the last years of her life, and died in 1831. Mr. Douglas gives a letter of hers, in which she says: —

"Burns's *Chloris* is infinitely obliged to Mrs. —— for her kind attention. Ruth was kindly treated by Boaz; perhaps Burns's *Chloris* may enjoy similar fate in the fields of men of talent and worth. Mch. 2, 1825."

When Burns sent one of his songs on Chloris to Thomson, he wrote as follows: —

"The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much."

"The great charm of a woman, in Burns's eyes, was always her womanhood, and not the angelic mixture which other poets find in her." — HAWTHORNE.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1799.)

IT is interesting to note that when the poet was himself in the depths and facing the inevitable, he possessed the "luxury of existence," — the power to sympathize with those who had been his fellows in suffering. Alexander Cunningham was one of the Edinburgh friends whose love and loyalty were shown throughout Burns's life. He was in turn loved by Burns, who was wont to place him with the Earl of Glencairn, his patron in art. When he suffered by the unfaithfulness of his fair lady, Burns consoled him by sending him many songs, and among them this beautiful lyric. "With these five double stanzas," says Douglas, was sent a song to Chloris:

O BONNIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER,

"O bonnie was yon rosy brier,
That blooms sae fair frae haunt o' man;
And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin' sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure among the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
  That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
  Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
  Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
  Its joys and griefs alike resign."

These poems formed the contents of one sheet transcribed by the poet for his "very much valued friend Mr. Cunningham," on 3d August in 1795, and signed "Coila." It is addressed thus: "To Mr. Cunningham, une bagatelle de l'amitie."

"On the 20th January thereafter," says Douglas, "the poet, as if just awakened out of a trance, thus addressed Mrs. Riddel: 'The Muses have not quite forsaken me. The following detached stanzas I intend to interweave in some disastrous tale of a shepherd despairing beside a clear stream,' 'L'amour, toujours l'amour.' He then transcribes the three central verses of this poem to Mr. Cunningham without variation."

The last letter he wrote to Mr. Cunningham was on July 10, 1796, only a few days before his death. In it he says: "Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more! For these eight or ten months I have been ailing. You would not know me if you saw me!"

Alluding to the fact that so many in Burns's time recognized him, and valued him at his true worth, Hawthorne says:—

"It is far easier to know and honor a poet when his fame has taken shape in the spotlessness of marble, than when the actual man comes staggering before you besmeared with the sordid stains of his daily life. For my part, I chiefly wonder that his recognition dawned so brightly while he was yet living. There must have been something very grand in his immediate presence, some strangely impressive characteristic in his natural behavior, to have caused him to seem like a demigod so soon."

1796.

ALTHO' THOU MAUN NEVER BE MINE.

(Geo. Thomson's Coll., 1799.)

EARLY in this year Burns went to the shores of the Solway to try the sea-bathing; and while there he met Mrs. Riddel, whom he had not seen for some time. She wrote, "I was struck with his appearance on entering the room. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, 'Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?' He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon. . . . His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy on him. . . . He said he was well aware that his death would create some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation. . . . I had seldom seen his mind greater or more collected." This prediction of his was not wide of the mark. What the many-headed beast did the world knows, and is ashamed of.

He returned to Dumfries in July, and here he died on the 21st. During his last illness he was nursed by a young neighbor lass, Jessy Lewars (Mrs. Burns being ill); and surely her ministrations were not without their reward, for this song and the following two have made her name known throughout the world. She was married in 1799 to one Thomson of Dumfries. A family of five sons and two daughters resulted from this union. In 1844, at the Burns festival at Ayr, she and her husband sat next to the relatives of the poet, on the right hand of the chairman. She survived her husband several years, and lived at Maxwelltown, near Dumfries. She died in 1855, and was buried near the mausoleum of the bard.

"We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first and abides with us to the last with a total want of affectation." — CARLYLE.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

PROFESSOR SHAIRP says that one morning the poet told Jessy if she would play to him some favorite tune for which she would like new words, he would try to furnish them. She sat down at the piano, and played over several times the air of an old song beginning thus: —

"The robin cam' to the wren's nest,
And keekit in, and keekit in,"

whereupon Burns composed this beautiful song.

Mendelssohn composed a melody for the words of Burns's song, which he arranged as a duet.

Dr. John Brown declared this to be "the most perfect, the finest love-song in our or in any language; the love being affectionate, more than passionate, — love in possession, not in pursuit."

There are two classes of poets as related to each individual reader, — those who are admired and revered, and those who are loved. We do not love Homer and Æschylus, Virgil and Dante, Shakespeare and Milton; they are too far away from us; they are not touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but we love Robert Burns, even with all his faults, and possibly because many of them are so like our own. These faults he was not slow to acknowledge, for sincerity was the fundamental note of his being. He would not wish us to love his faults, nor to forget them, but to profit by them.

The pathos of these last days at Dumfries is very intense. There is no sadder picture in history than that of this sweet soul crushed under the burden too heavy for it to sustain, and yielding its divine fragrance to the world.

"'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels
Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day
Beside you, and lie down at night by you,
Who care not for their presence, muse or sleep,
And all at once they leave you, and you know them;
We are so fooled, so cheated!"

Burns's last letters were to his oldest and most loyal friends, — Cunningham, Mrs. Dunlop, and Mrs. Riddel. He does not forget

to thank them for all the pleasure they have given him. Perhaps we ought not to complain if he did not; but yet we have to ask why it was that those who knew him, in those days when he shed such a lustre upon the inner circle of the Edinburgh gentry, did not lift a hand to ease him of his great load. Could he but hear the voices which rise upon every hand in this centenary year, from poet, press, and pulpit even, he might praise the early martyrdom which was but for time, while he views the apotheosis which is for eternity. Not the least of his satisfaction would come, I fancy, from the thought that he had influenced other poets. Mr. William Watson has alluded to the *passing* of Burns and the *coming* of Wordsworth and Coleridge, as follows: —

"Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long
Whelmed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those
Twin morning stars of the new century's song,
Those morning stars that sang together, rose."

Of his death on the 21st of July, 1796, Alexander Smith writes: — "Mighty is the hallowing of death to all — to him more than to most. Farmer no longer, exciseman no longer, subject no longer to criticism, to misrepresentation, to the malevolence of mean natures and evil tongues, he lay there, the great poet of his country, dead too early for himself and for it. He had passed from the judgment of Dumfries, and made his appeal to Time."

"In his family Burns was the watchful, kindly, diligent father, — not to be spoken of in the same day with the father who neglects his household for himself, who forgets their need, and loses their love; and the man who degrades him as an habitual drunkard, unable to meet life's daily duties, does not know what he is speaking of."— Dr. Edward Everett Hale, address at the Burns Centennial, Boston, July 21, 1896.

"We are near the century of Burns's death, and his fame stands beyond question higher than ever; and a fame, let us remember, not of the coteries, but, so to speak, of the equator." — Ernest Rhys.

Dumfries is the least poetical of the homes of Burns; yet, notwithstanding all its commonplace, one would as naturally omit going to Stratford in England, as to pass by Dumfries in Scotland. The house

in which he lived the last few years of his life, and in which he died, July 21, 1796, is a two-story stone house, with nothing to distinguish it from its neighbors. Burns's study and his bedchamber adjoining are upon the second floor. We can hardly believe that from this prosaic place some of Burns's richest and sweetest songs were given to the world. The old Church of St. Michael's is in a more interesting section of the town, and here in the churchyard is the mausoleum of Burns. It stands over the vault in which rest the bones of the poet, Jean Armour, and some of his children.

The monument is a sort of Grecian temple with dome and pillars. It was originally open to the weather, but is now enclosed with glass. In the floor is the gravestone which Jean had put upon the poet's grave before the monument was erected. Here is the marble statue of Burns at the plough, as he sees the *Vision* of the Muse of Caledonia, and hears her call to join the tuneful choir. If we go into the plain old church, the attendant will point out to us the poet's family pew.

"As we leave these somewhat melancholy scenes, we are reminded of the words of Wordsworth : —

'Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell, I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.' "

POEM ON PASTORAL POETRY.

(*Currie*, 1800.)

THE date of this is uncertain. Some place it in 1791. I have put it the last in this collection because it was found in the poet's manuscript after his death, and because it is a fitting tribute to one of Burns's masters ; but most of all because it breathes the very atmosphere of our poet's best work : —

"That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move."

We have already seen Burns paying tribute to Ramsay for his work in restoring and resetting the old songs, as well as for his work in writing new. He is in every way worthy of such tribute; for by his *Tea-Table Miscellany*, published in 1724, he did for Scottish poetry what Cowper and Crabbe were to do for English poetry: he brought it back to the business and bosoms of the Scottish peasantry after its wanderings with the poets of the Stuart period. In this poem Burns gives Honest Allan a still higher tribute of restoring the pastoral in his *Gentle Shepherd.* Here for the first time were revealed the beauty and the power of the pastoral landscape of the Lowlands.

> "Where a' the sweets of Spring and Summer grow
> Between twa birks, out o'er a little lin,
> The water fa's and makes a singin' din,
> A pool, breast-deep, beneath as clear as glass,
> Kisses with easy whirls the bord'ring grass;
> We'll end our washing while the morning's cool;
> And when the day grows het, we'll to the pool,
> There wash oursells — 'tis healthfu' now in May,
> And sweetly cauler on sae warm a day."

Here indeed auld Nature is painted to the nines.

Cf. Veitch, *Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry* (Ramsay); Mrs. Oliphant, *Royal Edinburgh* (Ramsay); Kingsley, *Burns and His School.*

Mr. Matthew Arnold, in his lectures on Celtic literature, gives four characteristic modes of treating nature, — the conventional, the faithful, the Greek, the magical. He says that in each of the last three the eye is upon the object, "but with a difference; in the faithful way of handling nature, the eye is on the object, and that is all you can say; in the Greek, the eye is on the object, but lightness and brightness are added; in the magical, the eye is on the object, but charm and magic are added. In the conventional way of handling nature the eye is not on the object. What that means we all know. We have only to think of our eighteenth century poetry to call up any number of instances." *Cf.* Sharp, *Lyra Celtica.*

"Now he haunts his native land
As an immortal youth; his hand
Guides every plough;
He sits beside each ingle-nook,
His voice is in each rushing brook,
Each rustling bough."

LONGFELLOW.

"I fling my pebble on the cairn
Of him, though dead, undying!
Sweet Nature's nursling, bonniest bairn,
Beneath her daisies lying.

We love him, praise him, just for this:
In every form and feature,
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,
He saw his fallen creature."

HOLMES.

It is said that the Scotch sing by turns the Psalms of David and the songs of Burns. When John Stuart Blackie was dying he asked his servant to sing his favorite psalm, and said, "The Psalms of David and the songs of Burns; but mind, the psalmist first!"

Although Burns was a democrat, yet he cherished that symbolism which represented title to greatness. Here is the coat-of-arms which he described in a letter to Cunningham in March, 1792.

"I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly-bush, seeded, proper in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper in chief. On a wreath of the colors, a wood-lark, perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper for crest. Two mottoes, round the top of crest, *Wood notes wild*, at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, *Better a wee bush than nae bield.*"

"Other poets may be the favorites of a class or a clique; Burns is the favorite of the whole world. The secret of this universal favor is to be found in the fact that he was born in a lowly condition of life, close to our mother earth, and gave utterance to the rudimentary sentiments, the abiding sorrows, and the constant yearnings of human nature." — ALFRED AUSTIN, *Address at the Unveiling of the Statue to Burns at Irvine, July*, 1896.

BURNS IN OTHER TONGUES.

THE works of Burns have been translated into the following languages : —

German.	Flemish.	French.
Swiss.	African Dutch.	Italian.
Danish.	Friesian.	Latin.
Norwegian.	Bohemian.	Scottish Gael.
Swedish.	Hungarian.	Irish Gael.
Dutch.	Russian.	Welsh.

The Cotter's Saturday Night has been translated into twelve languages; *John Anderson*, eleven; *Auld Lang Syne* and *A Man's a Man*, ten; *Tam O' Shanter*, nine; *To Mary in Heaven*, nine, etc.

RULES FOR PRONOUNCING SCOTCH WORDS.

"THE *ch* and *gh* have always the guttural sound (loch, bught); sound of the English diphthong *oo* is commonly spelled *ou* (mou, fou); the French *u*, a sound which often occurs in the Scottish language, is marked *oo* or *ui* (loof, guid). The *a* in genuine Scottish words, except when forming a diphthong (wae), or followed by an *e* mute, after a single consonant (saut), sounds like broad *a* in wall. The Scottish diphthong *ae* always (fae), and *ea* very often (lear, wean), like French *e* masculine. Scottish diphthong *ey* (fey) sounds like Latin *ei*." — *Burns Glossary*.

Mr. Douglas says, "We are informed that all Burns's Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire countrymen pronounce *ane* (one) and *ance* (once), yin and yince."

GLOSSARY.

A

A', *all.*
Abeigh, *at a shy distance.*
Aboon, *above.*
Abreed, *in breadth.*
Ae, *one.*
Aften, *often.*
A-gley, *off the right line.*
Aiblins, *perhaps.*
Aik, *an oak.*
Ain, *own.*
Airn, *iron.*
Airns, *irons.*
Airt, *direction.*
Aith, *an oath.*
Aiver, *an old horse.*
Aizle, *a hot cinder.*
Amaist, *almost.*
Amang, *among.*
An', *and.*
Ance, *once.*
Ane, *one.*
Anes, *ones.*
Anither, *another.*
Ase, *ashes.*
Asklent, *obliquely.*
Asteer, *astir.*
Aught, *eight.*
Auld, *old.*
Auld's, *as old as.*
Ava, *at all.*
Awa, *away.*
Ay, *always.*
Ayont, *beyond.*

B

Baggie (dim. of *bag*), *the stomach.*
Bairns, *children.*
Bairntime, *a family of children.*
Baith, *both.*
Ballats, *ballads.*
Ban', *band.*
Banes, *bones.*
Bardie, dim. of *bard.*
Barmie, *of, or like barm.*
Batts, *the botts.*
Bauks, *cross-beams.*
Bauk-en', *end of a bank or cross-beam.*
Bauld, *bold.*
Bawk, *an open space in a cornfield, generally a ridge left untilled.*
Beastie, dim. of *beast.*
Bellum, *a noise, an attack.*
Belyve, *by and by.*
Ben, *into the spence or parlor.*
Bicker, *a wooden dish.*
Bield, *shelter.*
Bien, *plentiful.*
Biggin, *building.*
Bill, *a bull.*
Billie, *a good fellow.*
Birdies, dim. of *birds.*
Birks, *birches.*
Birken, *birchen.*
Birken shaw, *a small birch wood.*
Birkie, *a spirited fellow.*
Bizz, *a bustle.*
Bizzies, *buzzes.*
Blae, *blue.*

Blate, *shamefaced.*
Blaudin', *pelting.*
Blaw, *to blow.*
Blaws, *blows.*
Bleerit, *bleared.*
Bleezin, *blazing.*
Blellum, *an idle-talking fellow.*
Blether, *the bladder.*
Blethers, *nonsense.*
Bleth'rin, *talking idly.*
Blin', *blind.*
Blinks, *looks smilingly.*
Blinkin, *smirking.*
Blude, *blood.*
Bluid, *blood.*
Blypes, *large pieces.*
Boddle, *a small coin.*
Bogles, *ghosts.*
Bonnie, *beautiful.*
Bonnocks, *thick cakes of oatmeal bread.*
Boortrees, *elder shrubs.*
Bouses, *drinks.*
Bow-kail, *cabbage.*
Brae, *the slope of a hill.*
Braing't, *reeled forward.*
Brak, *did break.*
Branks, *a kind of wooden curb for horses.*
Brattle, *a short race.*
Braw, *handsome.*
Brawly, *perfectly.*
Breastit, *did spring up or forward.*
Bree, *juice, liquid.*
Brent, *straight.*
Brig, *bridge.*
Briskit, *breast.*
Brock, *a badger.*
Brose, *oatmeal pottage.*
Brunstane, *brimstone.*
Brunt, *burned.*
Buirdly, *strong, imposing-looking.*
Bum-clock, *a beetle.*
Burdies, *damsels.*
Bure, *bore, did bear.*
Burns, *streams.*
Burnie, dim. of *burn.*
But, *without.*
But an' ben, *kitchen and parlor.*
Byre, *cow-house.*

Ca', *to drive.*
Ca's, *calls.*
Ca't, *called.*
Cairn, *rustic monument, or heap of stones.*
Calf-ward, *a small enclosure for calves.*
Callans, *boys.*
Caller, *fresh.*
Cam, *came.*
Cannie, *carefully, softly.*
Cantie, *in high spirits.*
Cantrip, *a charm, a spell*
Cape-stane, *cope-stone.*
Carlin, *an old woman.*
Cauk and keel, *chalk and red clay.*
Chapman, *a peddler.*
Chiels, *young fellows.*
Chimla, *chimney.*
Chows, *chews.*
Clachan, *a hamlet.*
Clap, *a clapper.*
Clarkit, *wrote.*
Clatter, *to talk idly.*
Claut, *to snatch at, to lay hold of a quantity scraped together by niggardliness.*
Clautet, *scraped.*
Claver, *clover.*
Clavers, *idle stories.*
Claw, *scratch.*
Cleed, *to clothe.*
Cleekit, *linked themselves.*
Clishmaclaver, *idle conversation.*
Cloot, *the hoof.*
Clootie, *Satan.*
Clout, *to patch.*
Clud, *a cloud.*
Coble, *a fishing-boat.*

Cog, *a wooden dish.*
Coggie, dim. of *cog.*
Coofs, *fools, ninnies.*
Cookit, *that appeared and disappeared by fits.*
Coost, *did cast.*
Coot, *waterfowl.*
Cootie, *a wooden kitchen dish.*
Corn't, *fed with oats.*
Couthie, *kindly, loving.*
Cowpit, *tumbled*
Cowt, *a colt.*
Crack, *a story or harangue.*
Craig, *the throat.*
Craiks, *landrails.*
Crambo-jingle, *rhymes.*
Cranreuch, *hoar frost.*
Craw, *to crow.*
Creeshie, *greasy.*
Croods, *coos.*
Croon, *a hollow and continued moan.*
Crouchie, *crook-backed.*
Crouse, *gleefully, with spirit.*
Curpin, *the crupper.*
Curple, *the crupper.*
Cushats, *wood-pigeons.*
Custock, *the centre of a stem of cabbage.*

Daimen-icker, *an ear of corn now and then.*
Dappl't, *dappled.*
Darklings, *darkling.*
Daur't, *dared.*
Daut, *to fondle, to make much of.*
Dawtit, *fondled, caressed.*
Daurk, *a day's labor.*
Deave, *to deafen.*
Deil, *devil.*
Deil haet, *devil a thing.*
Deleerit, *delirious.*
Ding, *to surpass.*
Dinner'd, *dined.*
Dirl, *a vibrating blow.*
Dizzen, *a dozen.*
Donsie, *unlucky.*
Dools, *sorrows.*
Douce, *grave, sober.*
Doure, *stubborn.*
Dow, *do, can.*
Dowie, *low-spirited.*
Drappie, dim. of *drap.*
Dreeping, *dripping.*
Dreigh, *tedious.*
Drift, *a drove.* Fell aff the drift, *wandered from his companions.*
Droddum, *the breech.*
Drone, *the bagpipe.*
Droop-rumpl't, *drooping toward the crupper.*
Droukit, *wet, drenched.*
Drouthy, *thirsty.*
Drumly, *muddy.*
Duds, *garments.*
Duddie, *ragged.*
Duddies, *garments.*
Dusht, *pushed by a ram or ox.*

Een, *eyes.*
Eerie, *scared, dreading spirits.*
Eild, *age.*
Eldritch, *frightful.*
Erse, *Gaelic.*
Ettle, *design.*
Eydent, *diligent.*

Fa, *fall.*
Fa', *lot.*
Fae, *foe.*
Fairin, *a present, a reward.*
Fand, *found.*
Fash, *trouble myself.*
Fash't, *troubled.*
Fasten-een, *Fastens-even.*
Fatt'rels, *ribbon-ends.*
Faught, *a fight.*
Faulding, *folding.*
Fause, *false.*

Fawsont, *seemly.*
Feat, *spruce.*
Fecht, *to fight.*
Feg, *a fig.*
Fell, *the flesh immediately under the skin.*
Fen, *a successful struggle, a shift.*
Fend, *to keep off.*
Ferlie, *to wonder.*
Fetch't, *pulled intermittently.*
Fidge, *to fidget.*
Fidgin-fain, *fidgetting with eagerness.*
Fiel, *soft, smooth.*
Fient, *a petty oath.* The fient a, *the devil a bit of.*
Fillie, *a filly.*
Fit, *foot.*
Fittie-lan, *the near horse of the hind-most pair in the plough.*
Flainen, *flannel.*
Flatt'rin, *flattering.*
Fleech'd, *supplicated.*
Fleesh, *a fleece.*
Fley'd, *scared.*
Flichterin', *fluttering.*
Flingin-tree, *a flail.*
Fliskit, *fretted.*
Flit, *remove.*
Fodgel, *squat or plump.*
Foord, *a ford.*
Forbears, *forefathers.*
Forbye, *besides.*
Forfoughten, *fatigued.*
Forgather, *to make acquaintance with.*
Forgather'd, *met.*
Forrit, *forward.*
Fou, *full.*
Foughten, *troubled.*
Fouth, *an abundance.*
Frae, *from.*
Fu', *full.*
Fuff't, *did blow.*

Gabs, *tongues.*
Gaed, *walked.*
Gaets, *manners.*
Gane, *gone.*
Gang, *to go.*
Gar, *to make.*
Gar't, *made.*
Gash, *sagacious.*
Gashin, *conversing.*
Gate, *manner.*
Gaun, *going.*
Gawcie, *jolly, large.*
Gear, *wealth, goods.*
Geordie, *George.* The yellow letter'd Geordie, *a guinea.*
Ghaists, *ghosts.*
Gie, *give.*
Gied, *gave.*
Gif', *if.*
Gilpey, *a young girl.*
Gizz, *a wig.*
Glaikit, *thoughtless.*
Glaizie, *glittering.*
Gleg, *sharp.*
Glinted, *glanced.*
Gloamin, *twilight.*
Glowr'd, *looked earnestly, stared.*
Goavan, *looking round with a strange inquiring gaze, staring stupidly.*
Gowan, *the daisy.*
Gowd, *gold.*
Graip, *a pronged instrument for cleaning stables.*
Graith, *harness, field implements.*
Granes, *groans.*
Grape, *to grope.*
Grapit, *groped.*
Grat, *wept.*
Gree, *a prize.*
Gree't, *agreed.*
Grozet, *a gooseberry.*
Grumphie, *the sow.*
Grunstane, *a grindstone.*
Gude, *the Supreme Being.*
Guid, *good.*

Ha', *hall.*
Ha' Bible, *hall-Bible.*
Hae, *have.*
here (in the sense of *take*).
Haffets, *the temples.*
Haffet locks, *locks at the temples.*
Hafflins, *partly.*
Hain, *to spare, to save.*
Hain'd, *spared.*
Haith, *a petty oath.*
Haivers, *idle talk.*
Hale, *whole, entire.*
Hallan, *a particular partition wall in a cottage.*
Hame, *home.*
Hamely, *homely.*
Han', *hand.*
Hansel, hansel throne, *a throne newly inherited.*
Hap, *to wrap.*
Happer, *a hopper.*
Happing, *hopping.*
Har'sts, *harvests.*
Hastit, *hasted.*
Haud, *to hold.*
Haughs, *low-lying lands, meadows.*
Haurl, *to drag.*
Haurls, *drags.*
Haurlin, *peeling, dragging off.*
Havins, *good manners.*
Hav'rel, *half-witted.*
Hawkie, *a cow, properly one with a white face.*
Heapit, *heaped.*
Hech, *an exclamation of wonder.*
Hecht, *foretold.*
Heeze, *to elevate, to hoist.*
Hie, *high.*
Hilchin, *halting.*
Hirplin, *limping.*
Histie, *dry, barren.*
Hitch, *a loop or knot.*
Hizzies, *young women.*
Hoast, *a cough.*
Hoble, *to hobble.*
Hog-shouther, *a kind of horse-play by justling with the shoulder.*
Hool, *the outer skin or case.*
Hoolie! *stop.*
Hoord, *hoard.*
Hornie, *Satan.*
Houlets, *owls.*
Hov'd, *swelled.*
Howe-backit, *sunk in the back.*
Howkit, *digged.*
Hoy't, *urged.*
Hoyte, *to amble crazily.*
Hughoc, *Hugh.*
Hunder, *a hundred.*
Hurcheon, *a hedgehog.*
Hurdies, *hips.*
Hurl, *to fall down ruinously.*

Icker, *an ear of corn.*
Ilka, *every.*
Ingine, *genius, ingenuity.*
Ingle-cheek, *the fireside.*
Ingle-lowe, *the household fire.*
Ither, *other.*

Jad, *a jade.*
Jinker, *that turns quickly.*
Jinkin, *dodging.*
Joctelegs, *clasp-kni*
Jorum, *the jug.*
Jouk, *to duck.*
Jundie, *to justle.*

Kail, *broth, colewort.*
Kail-runt, *the stem of the colewort.*
Kain, *farm produce paid as rent.*
Kebbuck, *a cheese.*
Kebbuck-heel, *the remaining portion of a cheese.*
Keekit, *peeped.*
Keeks, *peeps.*
Ken, *know.*
Kin', *kind.*

King's-hood, *a part of the entrails of an ox.*
Kirn, *a churn.*
Kirsen, *to christen.*
Kittle, *to tickle.*
Kiutlin, *cuddling.*
Knappin-hammers, *hammers for breaking stones.*
Knowe, *a hillock.*
Knurlin, *a dwarf.*
Kye, *cows.*
Kyle, *a district of Ayrshire.*
Kythe, *discover.*

Laggen, *the angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish.*
Laigh, *low.*
Lairing, *wading and sinking in snow or mud.*
Laith, *loath.*
Laithfu', *bashful.*
Lang, *long.*
Langer, *longer.*
Lap, *did leap.*
Lave, *the rest.*
Lav'rocks, *larks.*
Leal, *true.*
Lee-lang, *live-long.*
Leeze me on, *I am happy in thee, or proud of thee.*
Leister, *a three-barbed instrument for sticking fish.*
Ley crap, *lea crop.*
Lift, *heaven.*
Limbies, dim. of *limbs.*
Limmer, *a mistress.*
Lin, *a waterfall.*
Linkin, *tripping.*
Lint, *flax.* Sin lint was i' the bell, *since flax was in flower.*
Linties, *linnets.*
Lo'ed, *loved.*
Loof, *palm of the hand.*
Loot, *did let.*
Lough, *a lake.*
Lowpin, *leaping.*
Lows'd, *loosed.*
Lug, *the ear.*
Luggies, *small wooden dishes with handles.*
Lunt, *a column of smoke.*
Luntin, *smoking.*
Lyart, *gray.*

Mae, *more.*
Mair, *more.*
Mailie, *Molly.*
Mang, *among.*
Mar's year, 1715, *the year of Mar's rebellion.*
Maukin, *a hare.*
Maun, *must.*
Maunna, *must not.*
Maut, *malt.*
Mawin, *mowing.*
Meere, *a mare.*
Meikle, *as much.*
Mense, *good manners.*
Messin, *a dog of mixed breeds.*
Midden-hole, *the dunghill.*
Minnie, *mother.*
Mirk, *dark.*
Misca'd, *abused.*
Mislear'd, *mischievous.*
Mist, *missed.*
Moil, *work.*
Mony, *many.*
Moss, *a morass.*
Mou, *mouth.*
Moudieworts, *moles.*
Muckle, *great, big.*
Muslin-kail, *broth composed simply of water, shelled barley, and greens.*

Na', *not.*
Nae, *no.*
Naething, *nothing.*
Nane, *none.*

Nappy, *ale.*
Neuk, *nook, corner.*
Nick, *to break, to sever suddenly.*
Nicket, *cut off.*
Niest, *next.*
Nieves, *fists.*
Niffer, *exchange.*
Nits, *nuts.*
Nocht, *nothing.*

O', *of.*
Ony, *any.*
Orra, *supernumerary.*
Ourie, *shivering.*
Outler, *un-housed.*
Owre, *over.*

Painch, *stomach.*
Paitricks, *partridges.*
Parritch, *oatmeal boiled in water, stirabout.*
Parritch-pats, *porridge-pots.*
Pat, *put.*
Pattle, *a plough-staff.*
Paughty, *haughty.*
Paukie, *cunning, sly.*
Pay't, *paid.*
Pechan, *the stomach.*
Pechin, *panting.*
Pickle, *a small quantity.*
Pit, *put.*
Plack, *an old Scotch coin, the third part of a Scotch penny, twelve of which make an English penny.*
Pleugh, *plough.*
Poeks, *wallets.*
Poortith, *poverty.*
Pou, *to pull.*
Poussie, *a hare.*
Pow, *the head, the skull.*
Prent, *print.*
Prie'd, *tasted.*
Prief, *proof.*
Primsie, *demure, precise.*
Pu', *to pull.*

Quaick, *quack.*
Quaukin, *quaking.*
Quey, *a cow from one year to two years old.*
Quo', *quoth.*

Ragweed, *the plant ragwort.*
Rair, *to roar.*
Raize, *to madden, to inflame.*
Ram-stam, *forward.*
Rape, *a rope.*
Rash-buss, *a bush of rushes.*
Rattan, *a rat.*
Rattons, *rats.*
Raught, *reached.*
Rax, *to stretch.*
Ream, *cream.*
Reave, *rove.*
Red, *counsel.*
Reekin, *smoking.*
Reekit, *smoked.*
Reestit, *withered, singed.*
Rief, *slyness.*
Rig, *a ridge.*
Riggin, *rafters.*
Rigwoodie, *withered, sapless.*
Rin, *run.*
Ripp, *a handful of unthrashed corn.*
Ripps, *handfuls.*
Riskit, *made a noise like the tearing of roots.*
Rive, *to burst.*
Rives, *tears to pieces.*
Rock, *a distaff.*
Rockin, *a social gathering, the women spinning on the rock or distaff.*
Rung, *a cudgel.*
Runts, *the stems of cabbage.*

Sae, *so.*
Sair, *sore.*
Sairly, *sorely.*
Sark, *a shirt.*
Sarkit, *provided in shirts.*

Sauce, *scorn, insolence.*
Saugh, *the willow.*
Saugh woodies, *ropes made of willow withes.*
Saumont, *salmon.*
Saut, *salt.*
Saut buckets, *salt buckets.*
Sax, *six.*
Scaur, *to scare.*
Scaur, *frightened.*
Scaud, *to scald.*
Scawl, *a scold.*
Scho, *she.*
Scones, *barley cakes.*
Screed, *a tear, a rent.*
Scrieven, *gliding easily.*
Sell't, *sold.*
Shaw, *show.*
Shaws, *wooded dells.*
Sherra-moor, *Sheriff-muir.*
Sheugh, *a trench.*
Shog, *a shock.*
Shoon, *shoes.*
Shore, *to threaten.*
Shouther, *shoulder*
Sic, *such.*
Sicker, *secure.*
Siller, *money.*
Simmer, *summer.*
Sin', *since.*
Skaith, *injury.*
Skeigh, *high-mettled.*
Skellum, *a worthless fellow.*
Skelp, *a slap.*
Skelpie-limmer, *a technical term in female scolding.*
Skinklin, *glittering.*
Skirl, *to shriek.*
Sklent, *to deviate from truth.*
Sklented, *slanted.*
Sklentin, *slanting.*
Skrieigh, *to scream.*
Slaps, *flashes.*
Slee, *shy.*
Sleeest, *slyest.*
Sleekit, *sleek.*
Slypet, *slipped, fell over.*
Sma', *small.*
Smeddum, *dust, powder.*
Smeek, *smoke.*
Smiddy, *a smithy.*
Smoor'd, *smothered.*
Smoutie, *smutty*
Smytrie, *a number huddled together.*
Snapper, *to stumble.*
Snash, *abuse, impertinence.*
Snaw broo, *melted snow.*
Snawie, *snowy.*
Snaw, *snow.*
Sned, *to lop, to cut.*
Snell, *bitter, biting.*
Sneeshin-mill, *a snuff-box.*
Snick, *the latchet of a door.*
Snool, *to cringe, to submit tamely.*
Snoov't, *went smoothly.*
Snowkit, *snuffed.*
Sodger, *a soldier.*
Soger, *a soldier.*
Sonsie, *jolly, comely.*
Sough, *a heavy sigh.*
Sowth, *to try over a tune with a low whistle.*
Sowther, *to solder, to make up.*
Spairges, *dashes or scatters about.*
Spak, *spake.*
Spate, *a flood.*
Spavie, *a disease.*
Spean, *to wean.*
Speel, *to climb.*
Speel'd, *climbed.*
Spence, *the country parlor.*
Spier, *to ask, to inquire.*
Spier'd, *inquired.*
Spleuchan, *a tobacco-pouch.*
Sprackled, *clambered.*
Sprattle, *to struggle.*
Spritty, *full of spirits.*
Spunkies, *Wills o' the wisp.*

Spurtle, *a stick with which porridge, broth, etc., are stirred while boiling.*
Squattle, *to sprawl.*
Stacher't, *staggered.*
Staggie, dim. of *stag.*
Stanes, *stones.*
Stank, *a pool or pond.*
Stark, *strong.*
Starns, *stars.*
Staukin, *stalking.*
Stechin, *cramming, panting with repletion.*
Steek, *to close.*
Steeks, *stitches, reticulations.*
Steeve, *firm, compacted.*
Sten't, *reared.*
Steyest, *steepest.*
Stibble-rig, *the reaper in harvest who takes the lead.*
Stimpart, *an eighth part of a Winchester bushel.*
Stirk, *a cow or bullock a year old.*
Stockit, *stocked.*
Stocks, *plants of cabbage.*
Stoor, *sounding hollowly or hoarsely.*
Stoure, *dust.*
Stownlins, *by stealth.*
Stoyte, *to stumble.*
Strae, a fair strae-death, *a natural death.*
Streekit, *stretched.* Streekit owre, *stretched across.*
Strunt, *spirituous liquor of any kind.*
Sturt, *to molest, to vex.*
Sugh, *a rushing sound.*
Sumphs, *stupid fellows.*
Swank, *stately.*
Swat, *did sweat.*
Swats, *ale.*
Swirl, *a curve.*
Swith, *swift.*
Swither, *doubt.*
Syne, *since.*

Tackets, *a kind of nails for driving into the heels of shoes.*
Tae, *toe.*
Taen, *taken.*
Tak, *to take.*
Tawie, *that allows itself peaceably to be handled.*
Tawted, *matted, uncombed.*
Teats, *small quantities.*
Teen, *provocation, chagrin.*
Tent, *to take heed.*
Tentie, *heedful.*
Thack an rape, *clothes.*
Theekit, *thatched, covered up, secured.*
Thegither, *together.*
Thole, *to suffer, to endure.*
Thowes, *thaws.*
Thrang, *busy.*
Thraw, *to sprain or twist.*
Thrawin, *twisting.*
Thretteen, *thirteen.*
Throwther, a' throwther, *through-other, pell-mell.*
Till't, *to it.*
Timmer, *timber.*
Timmer propt, *timber propt.*
Tinkler, *a tinker.*
Tippence, *twopence.*
Tirl, *to strip.*
Tocher, *marriage portion.*
Tods, *foxes.*
Toom, *empty.*
Toop, *a ram.*
Towmond, *a twelvemonth.*
Toy, *a very old fashion of female headdress.*
Toyte, *to totter.*
Transmugrify'd, *metamorphosed.*
Trickie, *tricksy.*
Trig, *spruce, neat.*
Trysted, *hour for love meetings.*
Twa, *two.*
Twal, *twelve o'clock.*
Twalpennie worth, *twelvepenny worth.*

Tyke, *a vagrant dog.*

Unco, *very.*
Uncos, *strange things, news of the country side.*
Unkend, *unknown.*

Vauntie, *proud, in high spirits.*
Vera, *very.*

Wa', *a wall.*
Wad, *would.*
Wae, *sorrowful.*
Wal'd, *chose.*
Walie, *ample, large.*
Wallop in a tow, *to hang one's self.*
Waly, *ample.*
Wame, *the belly.*
Wanrestfu', *restless.*
Wark-ulme, *a tool to work with.*
Warld, *world.*
Warlock, *a wizard.*
Warlock-breef, *wizard-spell.*
Warsle, *to wrestle.*
Warst, *worst.*
Warstl'd, *wrestled.*
Water-brose, *made of water, without milk or butter.*
Wattle, *a wand.*
Wauble, *to swing, to reel.*
Waukit, *thickened with toil.*
Waukrife, *wakeful.*
Waur, *to fight, to defeat.*
Waur't, *worsted.*
Weans, *children.*
Wee, *little.*
Weeder-dips, *weeder or hoe.*
Weel, *well.*
Westlin, *western.*
Wha, *who.*
Whaizle, *to wheeze.*
Whalpit, *whelped.*
Whare, *where.*
Whase, *whose.*
Whiddin, *running as a hare.*
Whins, *furze bushes.*
Whisht, *peace.* Held my whist, *kept silence.*
Whiskit, *whisked.*
Whun-stane, *whinstone, granite.*
Whyles, *sometimes.*
Wi', *with.*
Wiel, *a small whirlpool.*
Wight, *strong, powerful.*
Willie-waught, *a hearty draught.*
Willyart, *wild, strange, timid.*
Wimplin, *waving, meandering.*
Win', *wind.*
Winna, *will not.*
Winnock-bunker, *a seat in a window.*
Winnocks, *windows.*
Wintle, *a staggering motion.*
Wonner, *a wonder, a contemptuous appellation.*
Woo', *wool.*
Woodie, *the gallows.*
Wooer-babs, *garters knotted below the knee in a couple of loops.*
Wow, *an exclamation of pleasure or wonder.*
Wyle, *to beguile, to decoy.*
Wyliecoat, *a flannel vest.*

Yell, *barren.* As yell's the Bill, *giving no more milk than the bull.*
Yerket, *jerked, lashed.*
Yestreen, *yesternight.*
Yill, *ale.*
Yill-caup, *ale-stoup.*
Yird, *earth.*
Yokin, *yoking, a bout, a set to.*
Yont, *beyond.*
Yowes, *ewes.*
Yule, *Christmas.*

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